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MISS ALICE HUGHES.

THE COUNTESS OF STRADBROKE AND TWO OF HER CHILDREN.

52, Gower Street.



**CHE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits**

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**A HUNDRED . . .
YEARS AGO.**

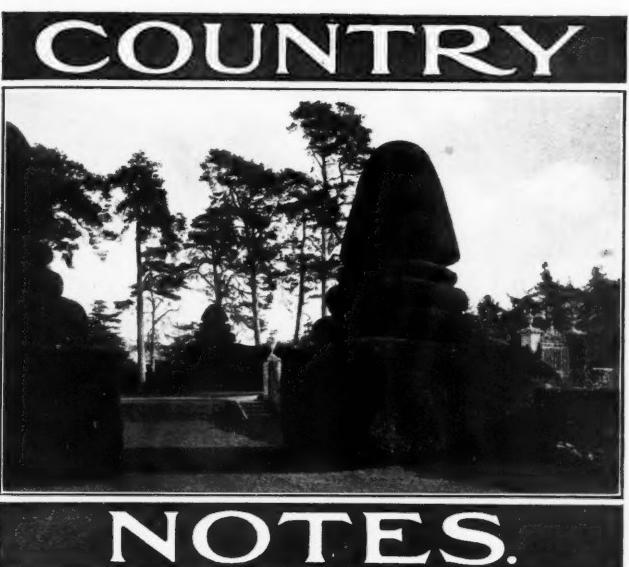
THE celebration of the centenary of William Pitt last week has naturally turned the minds of many to a consideration of the vast changes which have taken place since that January day in 1804 when he breathed his last. It is interesting to notice that Mr. Whibley, the latest of his biographers, repeats the story which Macaulay characterised as a myth—that the last words of William Pitt were, "Oh, my country! how I leave my country!" He was one who had in his own way struggled hard for the destinies of Great Britain, and, like other people who are deeply in earnest, his actual achievement fell far short of his hopes. He took the leading place in an England to be proud of. It was an England that had produced the Duke of Wellington, concerning whom Pitt said: "I never met any military officer with whom it was so satisfactory to converse. He states every difficulty before he undertakes any service, but none after he has undertaken it." If the soldiers had a Wellington to command them, the sailors had a Nelson. We can never forget that the anniversary of Trafalgar occurs within a very few weeks of that of the death of Pitt. The last public words of Pitt were those he addressed to the company assembled by the Lord Mayor, when, in reply to the toast of his health, he said, "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, I trust, save Europe by her example." We can, nevertheless, understand why it was that Pitt, with whom patriotism was the ruling passion, despaired of his country when he died. So many earnest men at different periods have lifted up the same burden. It was, for example, the settled conviction of Thomas Carlyle that the England of his day was going to the dogs, and there are few periods in which an equally ill-omened prophet did not exist. Yet, instead of having approached to the verge of ruin, England at that time was touching the zenith of

greatness. It would not be exactly true to say that the country was prosperous; those who have searched the records of the time until they know the conditions under which men and women lived, are bound to arrive at the opposite conclusion. During the Continental wars the home population was being starved, and it certainly was very badly housed. A couple of generations had yet to pass before Kingsley and those who worked with him began to draw the public gaze to the frightfulness of the manner in which men and women were lodged, especially in the hamlets and rural villages. There the one-roomed house was not the exception, but the rule, and crowded within its squalid walls were often to be found a father and a mother of a family with sons and daughters grown up; old and young were pigged together in a manner as degrading and demoralising as it was filthy. Outside the cottage no attempt at anything like sanitation was made, but the refuse was heaped on the kitchen midden within a few yards of the door. But this state of things existed in the land until the nineteenth century was just about entering on its fourth quarter, and in the sixties the picture still held good of rural England. In towns, sanitary science had not yet been discovered. In addition to all this, the price of food had risen enormously while the war was going on, and the books of the period contain frequent references to the curious substitutes for bread which the poor people were glad to eat. Clothes, too, were extremely dear, and the rural swain was as badly dressed as he was fed. According to the most acute observers, England itself stood at the turning point of the ways, and, had it not been for the courageous spirit of Pitt and the enthusiasm he inspired, his own worst forebodings might easily have been fulfilled. Moralists of the time have drawn pictures of children orphaned by the war flying along the lighted streets and brawling in their innocence for victories that had caused the lives of the natural bread-winners and protectors, but few of them realised the joy that follows military and naval successes. Wellington never used very flattering terms in speaking of the recruits sent out to him, who were mostly from the country districts, but the strange fact is that, though the hardships they had gone through were great, they turned out to be bold and courageous soldiers, whose main faults were due to boisterousness. However it was accomplished the peasantry of the time was one of the hardest and strongest that ever the nation possessed, and probably that was the factor which upset the calculations of the pessimists. After the war the energy of manufacturers was turned towards the perfecting and inventions of new machinery, which gave them a lead among the commercial races of the world.

To realise the actual life of the time from what we know of the period constitutes a difficulty. In order to create a picture of it in our imagination we must try to fancy England without steam and without electricity. The main roads were excellent. They had been slowly, but well, made, and were suitable to the great coaching traffic that went along them; for in those days the coach-horn was one of the welcome and constantly-recurring sounds heard in the village. At the inns where they stopped one can still see the vast amount of stabling built to accommodate the large number of horses required; and it is easy to picture the burly guard and his passengers coming in to partake of the solid and substantial meal of the period at one of these hostgeries, while the ostlers attended to the needs of the four-footed travellers. From accounts left by some of those who went by coach from London to Edinburgh we can imagine the immense numbers of little thatched steadings which lay upon either side of the road, for though many Enclosure Acts had already been passed much of England was still cultivated in the old style, and there were many more small holders both tenants and proprietors than there are just now. Their houses appear to have been for the greater part thatched, and stood in the middle of the land. Already the more enterprising agriculturists had attacked the question of reclamation, and were stubbing the waste and draining the mere, though there was enough marshy land left to make the boom of the bittern a familiar sound in the country-side. The by-lanes, however, were ill kept, and so muddy that in bad weather they were practically impassable. How often do we read that my lord or my lady in his or her chariot, which was usually drawn by four and sometimes six stout horses, was literally stuck in the mud. But all this only gives us the merest glimpse of the England that has passed away. How the eyes of William Pitt would dilate with wonder if he could be brought back to gaze for one moment at the changes in the country he loved so well.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of the Countess of Stradbroke and two of her children. Lady Stradbroke is a daughter of the late General Keith Fraser, and her marriage to the Earl of Stradbroke took place in 1898.



COUNTRY NOTES.

BY the election of M. Armand Fallières to the Presidency, France confirms the tradition of steady Republicanism having peace and prosperity for its objects, which has been upheld for so many years by President Loubet. Like M. Loubet, like other great statesmen of France, from Henri IV. down the pages of history, M. Fallières is of the South, "cadet de Gascogne" in its best sense, with the impetuosity of the race controlled to service of the mature reason. His quiet manner, impressive by the very absence of gesticulation, commands attention and respect. His race springs from the vine-growing soil of France, and the people, especially those of the South, for whom his election is a triumph that seems to touch them personally, are able and ready to regard him as a paternal friend in his high place of office. The purely Repul-lican nature of his sympathies is in accord with the best ideals, and a sufficient guarantee against the personal ambition which has so often brought trouble, even if with glory in its train, on France. Privately, or even more widely, he is known as a kindly man—a man of the heart, as well as of the head—one with whom all the various elements, except those that tend to turbulence, will be largely content, for he represents in the most able way, and with wide experience, all that is most stable and most valuable in the French national character and tendencies; and abroad the impression made by his election is as favourable as in France itself.

From a statement which has been issued, we find that the total indebtedness of Japan owing to the recent war will come to something over £230,000,000, a sum which will strain the resources of even that wonderful country. But the history of nations shows that although the primary effect of war is to cause depression, this is usually of no long continuance, and leads inevitably to a reaction. One cannot forget that the prosperity of modern Germany dates from the end of the Franco-Prussian War. Since that time the country has gone on expanding and developing at a rate of which it had had no previous experience. The same principle has been exemplified in the history of Great Britain. At the conclusion of our great Continental wars in 1815 a period of hardship and suffering ensued; but the race that was begotten under the stress of warfare proved to be one of uncommon vigour, and in the forties was laid the foundation of the commercial greatness of England. It is noteworthy, too, that not only did we bring greater energy into industrialism, but among the men born just when the war was concluded were many who will ever hold the highest places in the record of intellectual progress. We have but to think of the names of men so diverse as Darwin and Carlyle, Tennyson and Dickens and Thackeray, to realise what a mighty generation sprang from the throes of war.

A certain amount of pathos is imparted to the "Nunc Dimittis" letter which Mr. G. J. Holyoake addressed to the Right Hon. John Burns, on his appointment to the Presidency of the Local Government Board, because, as events have shown, the writer had only a few more days to live. He died at Brighton on Monday, in his eighty-ninth year. Mr. Holyoake filled a very active place in his time, although the public had well-nigh forgotten him of recent years, during which he lived in close retirement at Brighton. Now and again he wrote letters to newspapers, but there was little to remind us of the stirring and active individual who figured so prominently some thirty or forty years ago. Probably the most substantial work done by Mr. Holyoake was the establishment of Co-operative Societies in Great Britain. The first of these was started at Rochdale, in 1840; it was followed by a great many others, some of which

were ruined by mismanagement; others, however, continued to flourish, and the co-operative movement took a definite hold on the English public. He was a martyr to his opinions, and at one time underwent six months' imprisonment—a fate from which he would have escaped in our more tolerant days.

A letter which appeared in the Financial and Commercial Supplement of *The Times* on Monday deserves more than passing attention. It deals with the false description of goods. It had been pointed out by a previous writer that shoddy is frequently sold as pure wool, and the question is—What redress is possible to the purchaser when he has been defrauded in this manner? The state of the law does not seem to be at all satisfactory. If the words "pure wool" were printed or written on the goods, the vendor could be prosecuted; but if he only described them in speech as being what they were not, there is no remedy. The public, therefore, ought to know that a verbal guarantee is worth nothing at all. The only way in which buyers can protect themselves is by requiring a written statement. Were this to be done, even in a few instances, there is no doubt that the custom of selling goods under false descriptions would be completely checked. No merchant could afford to have his reputation ruined by a conviction on a charge of having sold goods under a false description.

ELDER TREE MOTHER.

The Elder is a homely tree,
As in the wood is found;
The first to leaf, the last to fall
Unfaded to the ground;
Unfaded to the ground, my dear,
Though all leaves die at the end o' the year,
Still gownèd all in green she's here,
While dimmer the days draw round!

The Elder is a helpful tree,
As in the garden grows;
Her flower of grace shall make your face
As fair as any rose;
As dainty as a rose, my dear,
When Midsummer's dusk lies dewdrop clear;
Till Northern lights your steps shall steer,
Across the December snows!

The Elder is a happy tree,
As in the field is found;
The last to fall, the first to leaf,
All green unto the ground;
All green unto the ground, my dear,
Though East winds blow their outhorns drear,
Our Elder Tree Mother again is here,
And the sweet o' the year comes round!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

One step which has been taken by the new Government will meet with the approbation of all parties in the State. This is the appointment by the President of the Local Government Board of the Departmental Committee to enquire into the accounts of local authorities. The object of it is to ascertain, in the first place, the system on which the accounts of these bodies are kept; in the second place, to recommend, if possible, a method that will be generally applicable; and, thirdly, to draw up regulations which can be made for the purpose of showing accurately the amounts raised by local taxation and the purposes for which they are applied. Whatever may be our views upon this question, the first thing to be done is to obtain exact information of the kind here described. There is little doubt in the minds of those who have looked into the matter that steps should be taken to guard against excessive borrowing on the part of local authorities, each of which is creating a little national debt of its own. The result is an increase in taxation which adds greatly to the burdens of the householders.

It is evident that Sir Philip Magnus, the new member for London University, is not going to be inactive in the new Parliament. The first speech he delivered after his election foreshadowed a scheme for establishing what would practically be a university of science in London. This is a kind of institution that the country very greatly needs, as it is notorious that in no other department have we been so completely outstripped by Germany as in the application of science to industrial processes. We have in this country many profound students of science, and as far as discovery goes we can hold our own against any nation in the world. But many instances can be quoted to show that the Germans are much more able to put inventions to practical use, and this, no doubt, is in a large measure the consequence of the fact that in this country the teaching of science in its highest branches has been somewhat neglected. The defect is one that Sir Philip Magnus is setting himself seriously to remedy, and all who have the interests of the country at heart will wish him every success.

After all, the Velasquez Venus has been saved to the nation. Ten days had elapsed after the limit of time fixed by the dealers before the required amount was guaranteed; but in the end a private owner came forward and, with the greatest generosity, promised the sum required. This picture will cost the nation about £40,000—a very large sum indeed, but not an unreasonable one if we consider the fact that the Louvre offered more. The picture is unique, and we have lost so many art treasures during recent years that it is good to retain this one. The reflection cannot be avoided, however, that, if those who are responsible for art purchases had greater judgment, they might make their purchases at much less expense. Ten or fifteen years ago a fourth of the sum now paid for the Velasquez would have been considered a very high price.

Among the amusing features of the General Election is to be numbered the surprise of some of the rustics at obtaining for the first time in their lives a ride on a motor-car. Those who have been canvassing on either side can scarcely fail to have observed how the eyes of the humble voter glistened with joy at the prospect, and it perhaps would not be exaggeration to say that the novelty of this little trip has been the subject of as much—if not more—discussion as the fiscal policy itself. No one will grudge the labourer this innocent pleasure which the General Election brought in its train.

A subject of perennial interest is the devices by means of which it is rendered possible either to withstand the depredations of the sea or to win back some of the land that has been lost by coast erosion. The power of the wave is so stupendous that until lately very little had been done that was effective against its ravages. It would appear, however, from the opinion of experts, that the best method that has yet been tried is that of low groynes invented by Mr. Case. Groynes erected at low-water mark have the effect of collecting shingle and sand, and these form a new barrier. As the land both in Holland and on the East Coast which has been reclaimed from the sea is developing a remarkable fertility, the matter increases in importance and interest. We do not know that any trustworthy calculation has been made of the quantity submerged on the East Coast alone, but we are all familiar with Tennyson's lines wherein he exclaims, "O earth, what changes hast thou seen!" following the line, "There rolls the deep where grew the tree"; and tradition says that whole parishes have been submerged on this coast.

One of those terrible disasters which appeal to the sympathy of humanity in general has overtaken the crew of the Brazilian ironclad Aquidaban. The brief record of the catastrophe simply states that, as the result of an explosion on board, the ship herself has sunk, and that 300 sailors have gone down with her. It is but a few days ago that these brave men were offering a cordial hospitality to the officers and crews of the ships composing a flying squadron of our Navy under the command of Sir Alfred W. Paget, and the connection between the navies of the two countries has always been a strong one since the days of the great sea captain, Admiral Cochrane, who afterwards became Lord Dundonald. It would almost seem as though the Aquidaban had been doomed to misfortune, for once before she had met with an almost similar fate, when she was torpedoed and sunk by the Gustavo Sampaio in 1894 in the darkest hours of a stormy night. On that occasion she foundered in 24 ft. of water, but was refloated and repaired.

There are some seasons in which it is doubtful whether the plant that is popularly called the "palm" will be out in its feathery bloom by the time of Palm Sunday. There is, perhaps, no stronger evidence of how far all floral growth is in advance of its usual date than the fact that the buds of this "palm" are already bursting in many sheltered places in the Southern Counties, and even round about London. Another of the most beautiful things that our wild country has to show us is the bracken fern, in all its stages. It is seldom, indeed, that this is standing as late in the winter as the latter end of January. As a rule it has been crushed by the snow many weeks before. This year, however, it is still in all its beauty of autumnal russet hue.

The farmers of Essex, since the time when the whole county seemed to be in danger of going bankrupt, have developed a resourcefulness and energy which have evoked admiration on all sides. They began by reorganising the milk trade, with the result that dairy-farming became a useful and profitable industry. The latest scheme is one for facilitating the sale of farm produce in London. A number of agriculturists are taking stalls in the neighbourhood of Westminster, where their produce will be for sale, and they have formed centres, the chief of them being Ongar, at which the stuff will be collected. We presume it will be despatched to London by motors specially built for the

purpose. As it has been the custom to send the goods from this district to London by waggon from a distance of from twenty to thirty or even forty miles, there should be very little difficulty about carrying through the new scheme. At any rate, men who have obtained their experience in the school of adversity may be trusted to put the affair on a business footing. It promises as much from an industrial as from an agricultural point of view.

From the opening address of the Midland Auctioneers' Institute we learn that in Old Babylon estates were surveyed as carefully and as well as they are to-day. It was a very interesting address, and in the course of it the President showed that auctioneers, like other people, have their grievances. One of these is that, according to the recent ruling of a judge, an advance of half-a-crown gave the bidder a right of action when the auctioneer had let the goods go at a lower bid. This was interpreted by Mr. Brownson to mean that "a covering bid of ever so small a sum must be accepted." He also directed attention to a case at Southampton, where it had been laid down that an auctioneer selling the goods of a passive resister was bound to sell sufficient to pay his own costs as well, otherwise he could not recover his fees. These are typical examples of the matters that were brought up. They give point to the chairman's advice to young men, which was that the profession of auctioneering demands very careful attention. In it brains and common-sense count for more than classics.

THE GOLFER'S SONG.

Swinging turf and a swinging ball,
And a schooner swinging away to sea;
God's blue Heaven above them all:
What can the world hold more for me?
God created the earth and sky,
Emerald headland and sapphire sea,
Opal hills where the shadows lie:
God created the world for me.
Round the head and across the bay
Sails, like birds, hover out to sea;
Life is good to be lived to-day:
Life was meant to be lived by me.
Long grey shadows across the green,
Crimson arches across the sea;
Robed in red, like an Eastern Queen,
Dies the day that was born for me.

K. C. G.

Three noteworthy additions have just been made to the gallery of domesticated animals at the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. The most important of these concerns the story of the evolution of the horse. Quite recently Lady Wantage presented the skeleton of the "Shire" horse Prince William, and the legs of this animal are now exhibited to show the remarkable condition of the "splint" bones. These, as Mr. Lydekker has discovered, present at their extremities vestiges of the now vanished lateral second and fourth toes. It may be, as the discoverer suggests, that similar vestiges will be found in all Shire horses; so that, though not obvious externally, this race represents a living three-toed horse!

The second exhibit is that of the Bali "bantin," a domesticated breed of the Javan wild ox, *Bos sondiacus*. This is the first really good specimen of its kind ever exhibited in this country. The coloration is of a rich maroon brown, the legs from above the knee downwards being white, while there is a patch of white on the rump. The third exhibit will appeal to dog-lovers. This is an eight weeks' old Blenheim pup, by the Cherub out of Jupiter, and is remarkable as possessing the shortest nose on record.

No one, we suppose, who has been at all a careful observer of what is happening in the country of recent years, can fail to have noticed that the hedgerows, generally speaking, have not the strength and amplitude that they used to possess. The change is less apparent where the actual hedge growth is helped in its original purpose of acting as a fence by a big "bank," as it is called in Devonshire, serving as a basis for the hedge itself; nor in those countries of high farming where the hedges are of low, close-clipped quickthorn is it in evidence. The districts which are suffering are those where the usual fence is a hedge, more or less straggly, growing either from the mere level of the fields or with a low bank only as its foundation. It used, in its best days, to be impenetrable, fulfilling even that exacting Western American definition of the ideal fence as "horse-high, hog-proof, and rabbit-tight." But now it exposes gaps that a sheep can walk through, has become wholly ineffective, and lost much of its beauty besides. The cause is not far to seek—the hedger's art is lost. The modern attempts at laying a hedge in wattle kill more wood than they save, and now that the old hedger belongs

to a generation which has vanished, the best treatment left us for our hedgerows is to cut them straight and level on the top; thus, in time, they may recover their use, but in the meanwhile the ugly wire or paling must stop their gaps.

Golfers will study with very great interest the lecture which Mr. Martin H. F. Sutton delivered at the meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society on Tuesday on the formation and care of golf greens and lawns. On the importance of rolling and mowing, too, he dwelt to good purpose. One of the great difficulties experienced in keeping greens up to a high standard lies in the

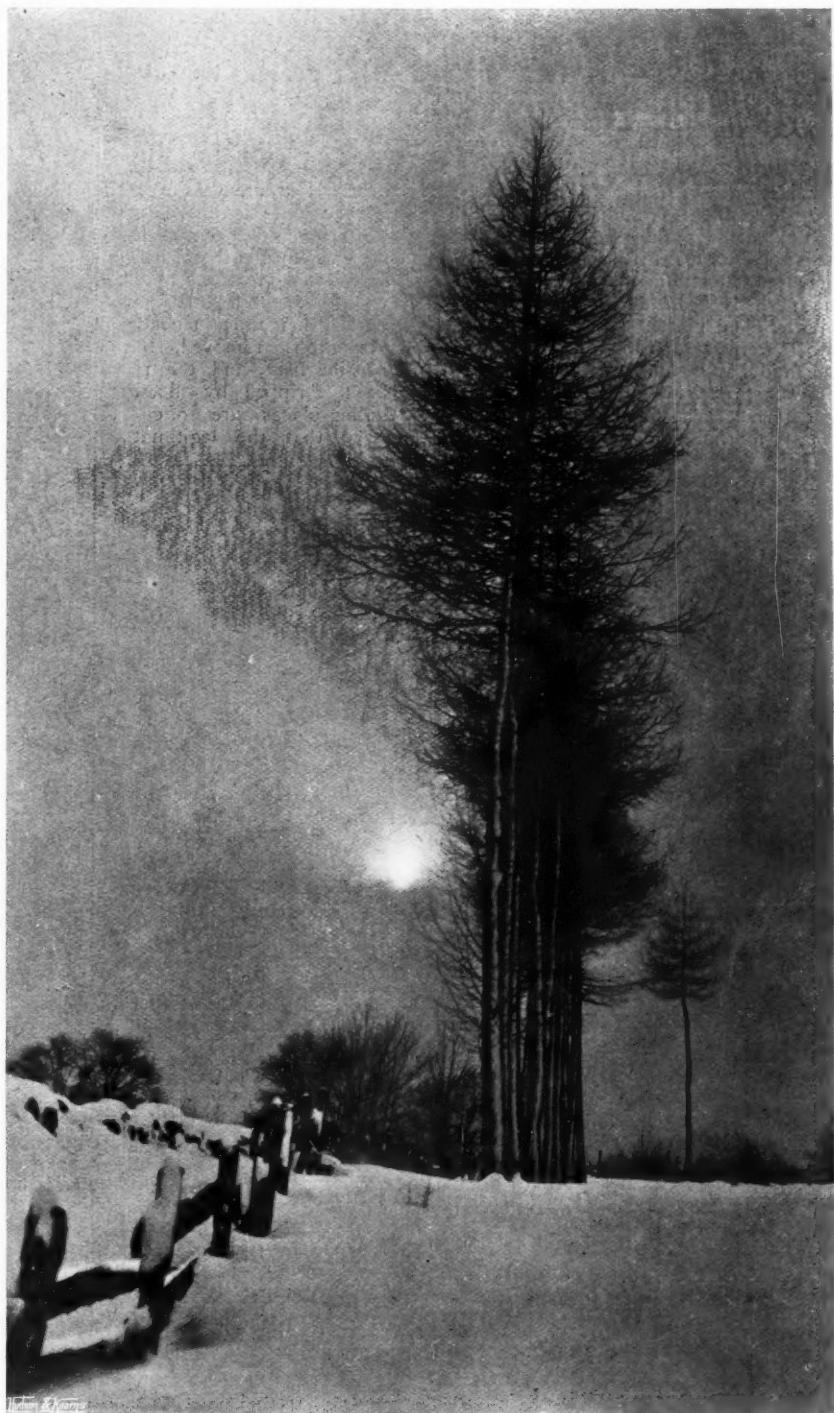
treatment of earth-worms. That these creatures are of very great value to soil used for ordinary purposes was shown long ago by Darwin, and is generally recognised now; but on the golf green they are what Mr. Sutton called them—"a great nuisance." Mr. Sutton made the very interesting announcement, as the result of experiments made at Reading, he has discovered a preparation which is perfectly harmless to human life, and effectually removes worms for a fair length of time. It has also a considerable manurial value. This will be welcome news to those who have found it difficult to keep the ground free from earth-worms.

THE COUNTRY IN WINTER.

PROPHECY under any circumstances is a somewhat risky business, but never more so than when spoken about the weather. During the course of last autumn scientific meteorologists, after observations of natural phenomena, joined in making a forecast that the present winter would be one of the hardest on record. Certainly all the old-fashioned science seemed to point to this. The Scotch proverb says, "Many haws, many snaws," and in the South of England the same belief is couched in a much prettier phrase, "God takes care of the birds," meaning that when a really inclement season is approaching He causes the wild berries to come in great plenty as a provision against it. We had the berries last year, but the snows did not fall. Again, since the time when the Greeks judged of the approach of winter by the flight of storks "steering away to the Libyan sands," birds have always been regarded as true weather prophets, and when the geese were heard flying Southwards with their strange cries in the nights of early autumn, and numbers of migrating songsters were noticed, it was generally believed that the great and early movement was due to extreme cold in the North, which would gradually find its way as far South as Britain. A snap of cold and a few showers of snow late in October or early in November seemed to be a fulfilment of these auguries; but the winter is passing away, and so far it promises to be as open as its immediate predecessor. It is ten years since a really hard winter was experienced in England. We do not know whether any record is kept, even in these days of minute observation, of the snowfall, but if so, recent years must have shown a very slight one. The

characteristic of the present year, and especially of this month of January, has been its tempestuous winds. Hurricanes of immense force have swept over the country, destroying woodlands and in many cases injuring houses. Another old proverb is that "A green Yule makes a fat kirk-yard," but the mildness of the weather about Christmas-time has not produced the fatal results expected of it. On the contrary, the death-rate in England at the present moment is one of the lowest on record, and especially the death-rate in London and some of the large towns. Medical men would probably concur in asserting that hard weather, though it undoubtedly braces the strong and healthy, brings up the death-rate by killing off the aged, frail, and ailing.

If we were to judge of humanity by the dumb creation, we should certainly say that an open winter was best for them. There is not a farmer in the length and breadth of England who does not know that during the last few years wild life has multiplied until it has almost become a nuisance. We all of us love to watch the birds and hear them sing in lane and meadow, and probably the agricultural classes have a deeper sense of this feeling than almost any other. Yet they cannot help wishing that a rigorous frost would come and thin the numbers of some of the species. The writer of the present article, who has observed birds for many years, never in his life beheld such flocks as have been seen within the last few months. First the wood-pigeons abound in such quantities that their noise when coming in to roost is like a discharge of firearms. There is a spinney where they are allowed to roost undisturbed, and the noise of their return about dusk can be heard within doors at a distance of several hundred yards. In the morning they go away in comparatively small



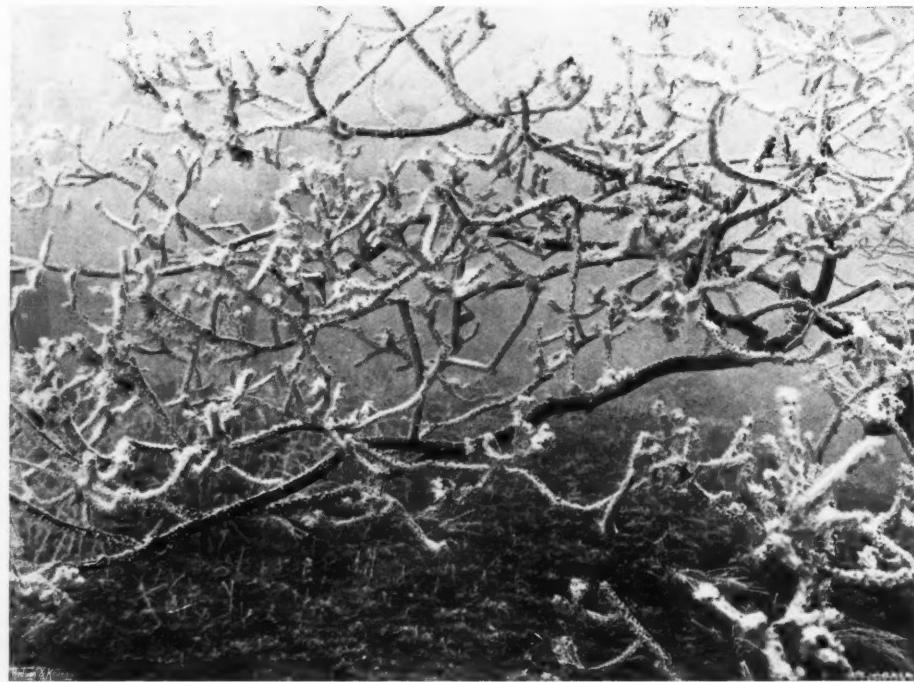
E. B. Vignol's.

UNTRODDEN SNOW.

Copyright.

companies. Many fly about the beech trees or alight on the ground, collecting mast for some little time, and then go abroad in squadrons foraging for food. But at night they arrive in the shape of two or three large squadrons, with stragglers continuously dropping in until darkness falls over the land. The small birds may even be seen in the late afternoon darkening the landscape like a great cloud as they shift their quarters. This particular phenomenon is by no means a regular occurrence, but has only been observed on a comparatively small number of occasions. It may quite possibly be

that these smaller birds are making a complete or a partial migration. When they descend on the seedfields or the orchards, which unhappily they do to a great extent in spring and summer, the destruction they accomplish is appalling. Yet there are some birds which, though they have increased, are still in welcome numbers. Of these the prime favourite is perhaps the little song-thrush. This is a bird of delicate constitution, and in the frost which came about ten years ago its numbers were reduced to vanishing point. Now, however, it is thriving and happy, and its welcome song will soon be ushering in the spring. Already its sturdier relative, the missel-thrush, or stormcock, as it is sometimes called, peals out its matins in the early morning and sings its loud and



A. H. Robinson.

A FROSTED BRANCH.

Copyright.

heard. They are like the first snowdrops and crocuses coming on in advance of their time. Furred life always has a hard time in the winter, whatever the weather may be. The characteristic most injurious to it is the dearth of cover. During the rest of the year, four-footed creatures may easily imagine that they have great wild forests to roam through, and they can spend the greater part of their time in concealment. But in winter, not only are the crops removed, but the weeds die out, the hedges become bare, and the river flows between banks that have been stripped by flood and wind, while their holes and hiding-places are often rendered uninhabitable by water. Now that the legitimate slaughter of hares and rabbits



F. Parkinson.

"THE SEDGES STIFF WITH RIME."

Copyright.

has become impossible, the poacher has his day. No system of preservation ever invented can keep him from exacting his share of wild life during these dark days and leafless months. At the same time, vermin are exposed to dangers almost as great.

wooden traps that may be bought for a penny each. They come from the fields for the bulbs on which they feast, their favourite being the crocus. Rats like this bulb also, but one can easily see the difference in the ravages made by the one and by the other.



A. Marshall.

A WINTER STUDY.

Copyright.

It is a curious fact, which perhaps may be also traced to the character of the last few seasons, that rats and mice have multiplied enormously during recent years. In a garden known to the writer, not by any means a large one, the gardener had caught up to Saturday last no fewer than 169 mice in those little

The mouse gnaws the bulb till nothing but a cup-like shell is left, while the stronger rat carries it away and eats it at his leisure in a favourite spot. This may appear to be theory, but it is a theory that was the result of practical experiment, because the mice were caught where they had been, and the rats



J. E. Latham.

"ON BOUGHS THICK RUSTLING CRACK THE CRISPED SNOWS."

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trapped near a little mound of refuse. One would have thought these rodents would have been kept in check by natural causes. Owls have increased to a very large extent during recent years, and their hooting may now be heard in places where it would have sounded strange a decade ago. No doubt these birds feast on rats and mice during the early months of the year

when there is little concealment, because they nest very early, and no bird nests early unless it be well fed. But we hear from so many quarters of the increase of rats and mice that it is evident that the owls are not sufficient to keep them in check. One reason for their increase lies probably in the neglect of the hedgerows. When farmers were better off than



J. W. Ellis.

THE EDGE OF THE COMMON.

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Jan. 27th, 1906.]

COUNTRY LIFE.

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S. C. Stean.

"FREEZE, FREEZE, THOU BITTER SKY."

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they are just now they took a certain pride in keeping the hedgerows clean ; but since the time of the depression their fences have been largely neglected, so that they form a natural harbour for rats and mice. No doubt the weasel lives and flourishes under the same conditions ; but the gamekeeper takes care that he and his cousin the stoat do not thrive so extensively as to be a check on the other inhabitants of

the fields. Such are some of the minor interests of the country in winter-time. Of course, the predominant themes are still hunting and shooting. The latter, it is true, is very nearly over for the year ; at least, big shoots are finished, and such shooting as there is is on a smaller scale, but the retrospect for the year is a very satisfactory one. Hunting, of course, is in full swing, and for it, at any rate, the season has been extremely satisfactory.

LORD CADOGAN'S JERSEYS.

LORD CADOGAN has attained eminence in many branches of human activity ; but today we wish to draw attention chiefly to his skill as a stock-keeper, and particularly as a breeder of pedigree Jerseys. His estate at Culford, about four miles from Bury St. Edmunds, is one that would strike the eye of the merest amateur as being uncommonly well kept. The very atmosphere seems to tell of care and understanding, for the hedges, always a fair criterion of the style of agriculture, are carefully trimmed and kept, and the land has that appearance which is inseparable from



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COW STALLS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

good cultivation. He has the good fortune to possess in Mr. M. W. Mortimer a gentleman qualified in every way to carry out the designs of an enlightened landed proprietor, and a visit to the Home Farm, where the Jerseys are kept, amply bears out the impression created by a first glance at the land. The Jerseys are cared for as well as if they were human beings. Mechanical ingenuity has been taxed for the purpose of providing the most adequate means of preparing food and which attain to

of erecting stall-houses and cow-houses the highest pitch of perfection. In the ordinary farm not



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FOUR OF THE HERD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

nearly so much attention as is desirable is paid to the housing of the cattle, the average dairy-farmer's belief being that anything is good enough provided that it will satisfy the requirements of the local authority. These cow-houses have evidently been built with the intention of securing the greatest comfort for the animals, and, at the same time, ensuring the greatest economy possible in labour. A long passage or gangway runs down the centre of each shed, and the stalls are arranged on either side, so that the animals face each other across the cement gangway. That in itself is an extraordinarily convenient way of placing the animals for the purpose of feeding and attending to them in the shortest possible time and with a minimum of attendance. Each cow is provided with a hayrack and food and water troughs, while each pair of stalls is separated by half a length from the others. We need scarcely say that the utmost attention is paid to cleanliness; the stalls are erected on a declining plane, so that the water runs down to a gully which carries it off from the stall. The result is that the stall of each cow is kept constantly dry, and no filth is allowed to accumulate about her. The walls have white tiles running half-way up, and the outside walls have half windows. The lower parts of the walls are provided with wooden ventilators somewhat after the principle of the railway carriage ventilator. That is to say, by moving a handle you can so separate the divisions that a full draught of air enters the place, while by reversing the movement, the window is closed and the cows are protected from excessive cold and draughts. Half doors open into the byre, and the arrangements taken altogether are such as to secure the utmost comfort to the Jerseys, at the same time allowing the work of the attendants to be done with the greatest economy of labour and the smallest possible trouble.

Of the Jerseys themselves, it would be impossible to speak in terms too high. The first to pose for her portrait was Reindeer's Bessie, and she proved a somewhat troublesome subject, for, with more than feminine mutability, she put herself into a hundred unseemly attitudes before condescending to take one that would show to advantage her beautiful qualities. Reindeer's Bessie was highly commended at the Dairy Show, and also won a butter test certificate. But the pride of the herd is Golden Streak, from whom many prize-winners have been bred. She is by Strawberry, 5407, out of Sunbeam; her grandam was Moonbeam, 2439, by Prince Louis, 2805, and her great-grandam Rising Moon, 6131. Thus her pedigree is established as one in which



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GOLDEN STREAK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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GUARANTEE.

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DUTOTE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

she can scarcely throw back to anything that is actually bad.

Golden Streak won the first prize at the Royal in 1897, the first prize at the Suffolk Show in 1900, and was very highly commended at the Bath and West of England Show in the previous year. Not only is she a great Jersey herself, but she is the mother of others that follow in her footsteps. She is the dam of Sunbeam, who took premier honours in 1901 at all the leading shows, including the Bath and West of England, the Royal, Tring, and Oxford. She is also the dam of Beatrice, who in 1895 was first in the Norfolk, second in the Royal, second at Tring, and third at the Bath and West of England in the year 1900; she was first at Oxford, first at the Suffolk Show, and the winner of premier honours at the Essex and Lancashire Shows. Among the recent additions to the herd are Eastern Belle, who was first at the Dairy Show last year, and Guarantee 13th, who was bought at Lord Rothschild's sale last year, and was first at the Dairy Show. It has not been the practice at Culford to buy cows from other breeders and win prizes with them. Preferentially, Lord



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AT THE FOOD TROUGH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

alluded is that in 1904 Lord Cadogan held a sale, and since then he has been obliged to make judicious additions to his stock. The



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HEADS UP!

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Cadogan always sends into the ring animals that he has bred himself, and the explanation of the purchases to which we have

herd of Jerseys has been in existence about fourteen years. It was originally selected from Lord Ashburton's large herd in Hampshire, from Mr. C. A. Batne's at Chorley Wood in 1889, and from Mr. Willat's herd at Whitton, Hounslow. Since then it has been most carefully managed; the sires have invariably been prize-winners, and ever since the herd was started very careful milk returns have been kept. We hope on a future occasion to give some extracts from these, from which it will be possible to gauge the capacity of the Jersey as a milking cow.

Very great care has always been exercised in the selection of sires for this herd, as it is fully recognised that the best dams are of little use unless suitably mated. The first bull used was Nero, 3567, an animal bred by Lord Chesham. He came from Mr. G. Simpson's celebrated stock at Wray Park, and won the first prize at the Norfolk Show in 1890. He was followed by Columbus,



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REINDEER'S BESSIE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

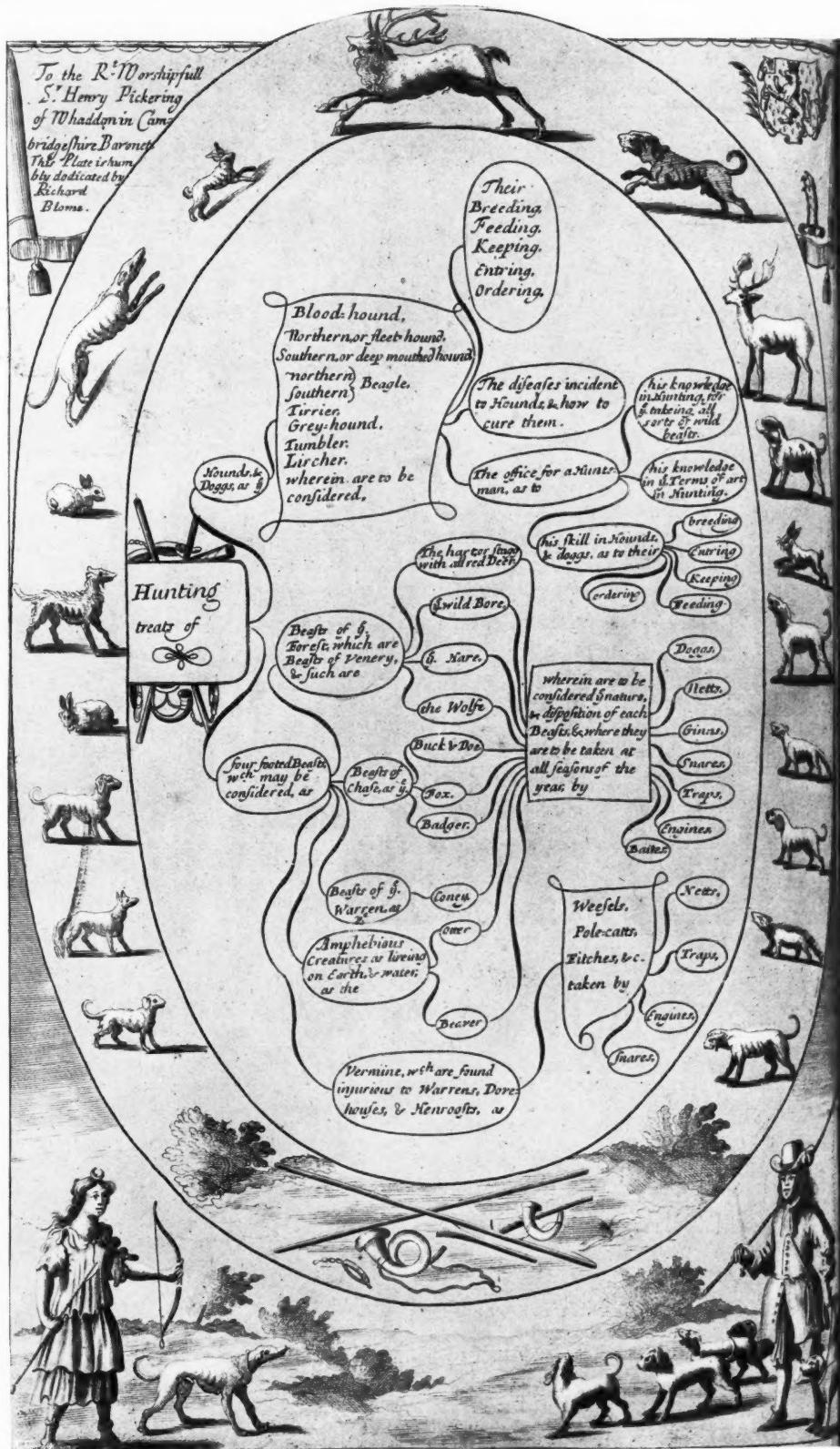
3184, and Golden Fluke, 4557. Both of these animals were imported from the Channel Islands, so that their use tended to help the purity of the breed. Columbus was used for a time in Lord Rothschild's herd at Tring, and took second prize at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show held at Plymouth, 1890. Later on, Lord Cadogan made purchases from the celebrated herds kept by Lord Rothschild and Sir James Blyth. Several highly-bred and valuable cows and heifers were added to the herd in 1892 and 1893, as well as the prize bull, Spartan, 5069, second at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at Leicester, 1896. His son Blucher followed. This bull also

won a large number of prizes, including second at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at Birmingham, 1898. He was out of a somewhat famous kine by Golden Lad, one who had distinguished herself in the butter tests. Mrs. McIntosh's Havering Pride, 6265, son of Montpelier, second at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at Maidstone in 1899, was used in that season and in 1900. The grand bull now in service is Topper, who in 1904 was first at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show and first at the Dairy Show. He is a splendid example of the best type of Jersey bull, and has a splendid pedigree.

STAG-HUNTING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

In that large and delectable volume, "The Gentleman's Recreations," published so long ago as the seventeenth century, there are many things to admire, but perhaps none more admirable than some in the discourse upon hunting, which is specially appropriate to the present season. The scope included within the section under the heading "Hunting," as figured out by the author, Mr. R. Blome, is a generous one, and some of its subjects are a little surprising. Hunting, as we understand it now, means most often hunting the fox. We should not mean stag-hunting by the name unless we carefully put the prefix. Mr. Blome, however, gives pride of first place to the hunting of various kinds of deer—"the Hart or Stag," "the Buck," and "the Roe-buck, and Doe." The buck means, of course, the fallow buck. Chapter IX., which follows the chapter on the roebuck, deals with the hunting of the "Wild Goat," and Chapter X. of hunting no less a creature than the "Raindeer." It is not until Chapter XI. that we reach the fox. Following him comes the badger, then the hare, and so on down to the wild boar.

The appearance of the "Raindeer" is indeed startling in an



FRONTISPICE.

English book of sport. It is true that the author begins by the judicious observation that "This Country produceth few or none of this sort, so that I shall have the less to say of Hunting him." He proceeds, however, to give some brief instructions, concluding: "For the finding out the Rain-deer you must use a Blood-hound, as before treated of," i.e., in the instructions for finding the red deer stag. But in spite of the author's caution that we are not to expect to find the "Rain-deer" plentiful, it is evident that he considers its hunting a contingency that the English gentleman ought to be prepared for; and it is interesting to compare what he says of the roe, that it is "a Deer well known in Germany, in the Helvetic Alps, and in divers Parts of Africa, where there is a Plenty of them, although not so among us." In fact, he seems to regard them as about equally scarce in England with the reindeer. As for the wild goat, he does not hazard an opinion as to its numbers.

Yet when he writes of the hunting of the red deer stag it is quite evident that he knows something of his subject, and most of his hints are very much to the purpose, though some it is impossible to accept reverently. He has a higher opinion of the stag as a beast

of venery than of any other. "This Creature," he writes, "of all other Deer, hath the most Ingenuity, and yet is the most fearful; and by his Windings, Turnings, and other Subtilties, as running into Herds, forcing others into his Footings, and taking refuge amongst Herds of Cattle, doth oft deceive the Huntsman, and put a Foyl upon the Dogs; for in his Chase (which often proves long) neither Hedge, Ditch, or River doth stay him, but he taketh all with great fierceness: Notwithstanding all which he is ensnared; for the Dogs, who pursue him by his Scent, being animated and encouraged by the Huntsman, he becomes their Prey. The Hart," he adds, "as also the Hind, are very long lived, being said to live about One Hundred Years. They are bred in most Countries, but *England* is said to breed the best."

It is to be feared that, if this last observation was a true one in the seventeenth century, it is not so now. He is, of course, treating of the red deer as a woodland animal, not, as we more commonly find him to-day, on the open hill. These were



HARBOURING THE STAG.

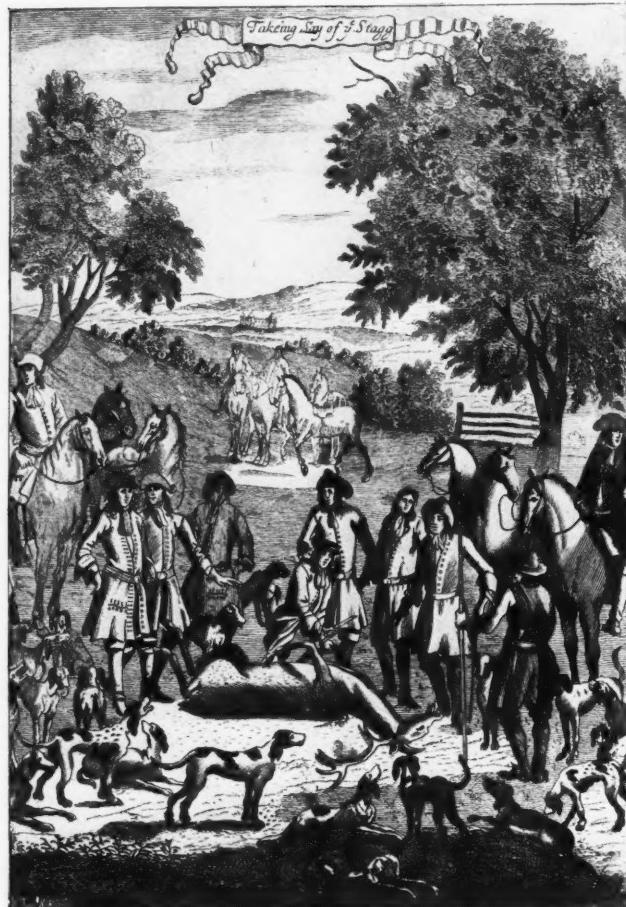
days before the passing of the Deer Removal Act of 1851, applying to the New Forest.

It is interesting to find how similar in many ways was the mode of hunting then to that which still is in vogue. The stag is to be "harboured" rather as he is now. "The next thing to be treated of," says the author (after a sketch of the natural history of the stag and hind), "shall be to find out the Hart or Stag, where his Harbour or Layre is; for the effecting of which, get up early in the Morning, and be sure to go not with the Wind; for the Hart is very quick of Scent, and will make away upon the least Fault; and if you go not betimes, Cattle will be let out, and stirring up and down, may chance to tread out the Slot where he hath pass'd. You must be provided with a *Blood-hound*, *Draught-hound*, or *Suit-hound*, which must be led in a Liam, according as in the Plate is represented; and for the quickening of his Scent, 'tis good to rub his Nose with Vinegar." The plate referred to is entitled "The Harborer with y Blood-hound, for harbouring the Stagg." The stag is represented with his head peering above a thicket at 5yds. from the man and dog, regarding them with an eye of very pardonable apprehension.



STAG TAKING SOIL.

Cows and a horse browse in very close proximity, and a team is ploughing in the next field, all which confirm the impression, conveyed by the caution to be up before cattl tread out the slot of the stag, that his harbour is supposed to be in more frequented



THE DEATH OF THE HART.

surroundings than we should look for it now. It is always hard, in this author's works, to discover how much that surprises us is to be accepted as the remark of one who knows his subject, and how much to be merely appreciated as ingenious "fond invention."

This harbouring was generally to be done on the day before it was proposed to hunt the stag. "For in those Months that he is in the Pride of his Grease, he retires from Feeding back to his Layre, about Sun-rising; and for the most part, if not always, to one and the same Place, unless he meet with some notable Disturbance in the Interim." But alternatively, it seems, the harbourer might climb a tree and watch the deer coming into covert in the early morning from that point of vantage.

"But to proceed to the Chase of the Hart," as our author says. "The Huntsmen must disperse themselves about the Sides of the Wood, according to the best advantage, to espy if it be a Deer, according to the Harlinger's Description" (that is, as we should say, whether it is a "warrantable deer"), "and when he breaks Covert, to give notice thereof to the Company, by blowing a *Reheat*; and if the Hounds run Riot (that is, chase some Rascally Deer) then they must be rated; that is, stop them by Words of Correction, or the like.

"But your Hounds should not all be uncoupled, until the Hart is unharboored by the *Harbourer*, and cast off the *Staunch-Hounds* first, which having undertaken the Chase, cast off the rest," and so on. This is, of course, equivalent to putting in the "tufters," as we call them now.

Then he goes on to speak of all the wiles of the stag; how he will put up another and lie down in his bed, choose ground that will leave little trace of footmarks or of scent, double back, take soil (that is to say, go to water), and so on. There are pictures of the unharbooring and of the chase, of the stag taking soil and at bay, of his death, and of the *post-mortem* ceremonies, all extremely curious.

It is probably quite true that, in those days, when the hounds were much slower than they are now, though perhaps with better noses, the stag at bay was very formidable. He was not so spent and winded. This is what Mr. Blome says: "Nor is the less Skill required at the last, when he is spent, and the Dogs are at Bay on Land"—he had previously been discussing the case of the last stand being made in a river—"for then he endangers Horse and Man: You must therefore Wisely go to work, for the chief glory in a Victory is to be without Loss or Hurt." The plate entitled "The Stagg at Bay" depicts a gentleman, dismounted from his horse, shooting at the stag with a very long gun, while the hounds stand aside discreetly. The author says: "As to the Land Bay, if the Hart be frayed, and burnished" (I take this to mean if his horns are clean and he is worth killing; but ought not this to have been ascertained a little earlier?) "then the Place is well to be considered of" (whether it is a comfortable place for killing him); "but if you miss, and he turn Head upon you, it is convenient to take Refuge behind some Tree; or when he is at Bay, Couple up your Hounds; and when you see him turn Head to fly, Gallop in roundly and kill him with your Sword or Gun, before he can have time to turn Head upon you."

We may smile at the manner in which these precautions are expressed, but even in the twentieth century the stag at bay is dangerous enough, and after "galloping in roundly," most of us would prefer to finish him off with the gun, rather than with the

sword at close quarters. Then follow the obsequies, among which this pleasant counsel of justice is to be noticed: "You must observe that the *Bloodhound* must be first Rewarded, for that Honour belongs to him."

If the stag is lost, marks are to be set to show where to take up the chase on the following day. Some modern hunters have wondered whether this was really ever done; but probably there is no reason to doubt it.

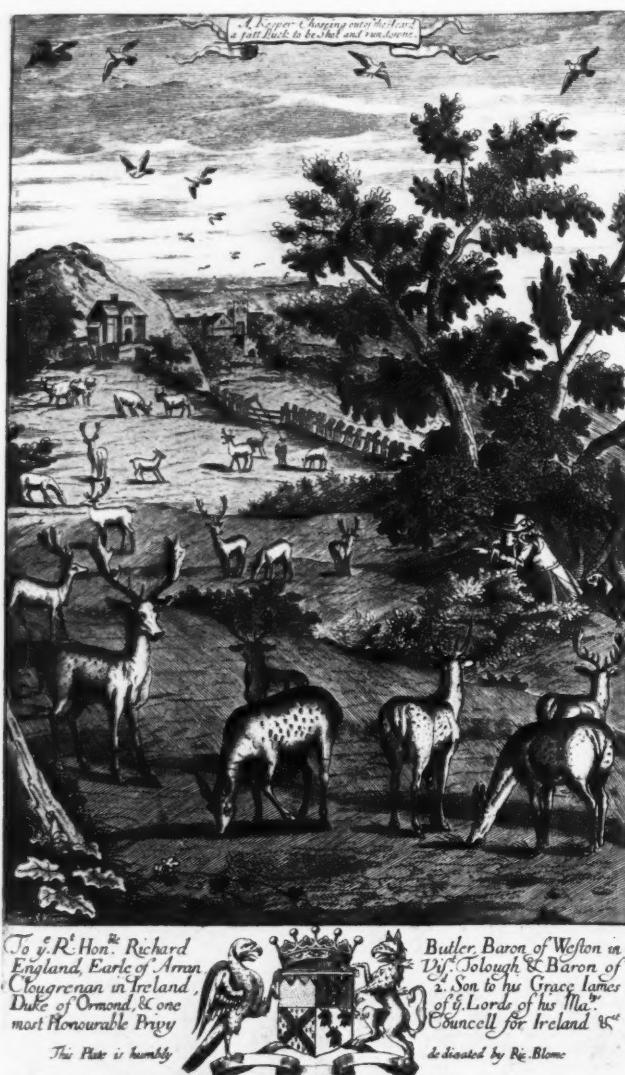


SHOWING BUCK'S HEAD TO HOUNDS.

Then he tells you all the uses, medicinal and otherwise, to which the stag's body can be put—curious, and not altogether decent—though he concludes: "I shall not descend to give you Instructions, for the applying the aforesaid Parts of the Stag to use, it being a Discourse not so proper for the Subject in hand; but refer you to Books of Physick."

It is singular to see in how few particulars we have departed from the manner of hunting the red deer set down in this

interesting old book. One is thankful to say that so far as any hunting of the fallow is still done, we have changed one detail, at all events; for Mr. Blome opens that subject thus: "For facilitating the Chase, the Keeper commonly selects fat Buck out of the Herd, which he shoots, to Maim him; and then he is Run down by the Hounds." There is a plate which illustrates this amiable practice (if practice it really ever was; for other instances show us that it is possible to suppose Mr. Blome mistaken). There is also a charming plate of the huntsman holding up the buck's head to the hounds, for a purpose which



KEEPER SHOOTING FALLOW BUCK TO MAIM.

the author explains as follows, in a paragraph which may conclude the subject: "The Head being cut off is shewed to the Hounds, to encourage them to run only at Male Deer, which they see by the Horns, and also to teach them to bite only at the Head: Then the Company all standing in a Ring, one Blows a Single Death; which done, all Blow a Double Reheat, and so conclude the Chase with a generall Hallow of Hoo-up, and depart the Field to their several Homes, or to the place of Meeting; and the Huntsman, or some other, hath the Deer cast across the Buttocks of his Horse, and so carrieth him Home."

THE RUSTIC VOTER.

BY M. E. FRANCIS.

A KENTISH labourer was once congratulated on the impulse of filial affection which caused him to visit his aged parent in the local workhouse. He listened with an air of conscious virtue, and remarked piously, "Yes, and I did give the old man sixpence; I hope the Lard 'ull mind it to me."

The attitude assumed by the rustic voter, in this free and enlightened country, is often very similar. He has got something to give, something, it is true, only recently acquired, and not, it may be, called for by any overwhelming merit or even need on his part, but nevertheless something of value; and when he in turn bestows it, either on the Government actually in being, or on that he would fain see in its place, he does so with a

complacent sense of generosity. He need not give it at all if he does not like, he reflects; very often he does not like. One conscientious lady canvasser was recently routed by an old carter, whose vote she was endeavouring to obtain for the Conservative candidate. He was in charge of a waggon-load of manure, and walked ostentatiously aloof from the footway in the middle of an extremely muddy road. But his persecutor, nothing daunted, trudged beside him, exhausting herself in remonstrances and efforts at persuasion.

But all to no purpose. Elections was nonsense, he opined, and meetin's was nonsense. He wasn't goin' to none of 'em, he wasn't. He couldn't be bothered wi' listenin' to all the stuff folks was talkin' yonder. He hadn't time—he'd other things to be thinkin' on. There! (coming to a standstill in the middle of a puddle), he'd a-lived seventy-five year in this world wi'out meddin' wi' any such rubbish, an' he wasn't goin' to begin at that time o' day.

But there are some who attach very great importance to this new possession of theirs, and are anxious to turn it to the best possible account. An old woodcutter, indignant at the failure of the candidate for whom he had voted, declared that if he'd a-known his vote was goin' to be throwed away he'd a-voted for t'other side, blowed if he wouldn't! E-es, an' that's what he'd do next time.

Others, again, take a deep, almost feverish, interest in the matter, forming conclusions and making calculations which would astonish the ordinary statistician. A certain labourer announced lately that he found himself already two shillings a week out of pocket since the abolition of the sugar bounties. As the household consisted but of himself and his wife, his rate of expenditure must have been princely. Another, blandly waving aside all explanation ament the bearing which the failure of the beet crop might have upon the question, stated that he knew for a fact there were 500,000 tons of sugar waiting for us in Russia, the importation of which was prohibited by the Conservative Government. On being diffidently pressed for the source of his information, he remarked that it had been supplied to him by a certain Mr. Simpson, who travelled in the oil way.

"He's a man what knows," he added significantly. There, again, one felt the absolute impossibility of proceeding further. Of what value were arguments, pamphlets, quotations of statistics, against the evidence of Mr. Simpson? He was a man who really did know—naturally, since he travelled in the oil way.

Mr. Simpson's disciple, whom I shall here call Adlem, though that was not his real name, requested a personal interview with the lady canvasser afore-mentioned. To this she joyfully acceded: he had been registered as "doubtful," and there seemed reason to hope that he might be won over.

Mr. Adlem called, and was good enough to spend a couple of hours, not, as she soon discovered, to listen to her arguments, but to regale her with his own. It was evident, indeed, that so far from being "doubtful," his principles were of the most decided order, and she presently perceived, with some consternation, that he did not intend to leave the house without having made a convert of her. Beginning with the sugar question, he proceeded to review Mr. Chamberlain's policy dispassionately, and, as it were, more in sorrow than in anger. He was rather severe in dealing with Mr. Balfour, however, and remarked more than once that he wasn't a man as seemed to know his own mind. Being a Nonconformist, he had, naturally, a good deal to say on the education question, and at this point his opponent managed to introduce a few words, to which he listened tolerantly.

"I d' low," he remarked presently, "you haven't read the Eddication Act itself though, have 'ee?"

She was reluctantly compelled to admit that she had satisfied herself with such summaries as had appeared in the newspapers.

"I thought ye hadn't read the Act," returned Mr. Adlem, kindly ignoring her discomfiture. "I have, ye see, and I drawed my own conclusions."

From Chinese labour he proceeded to touch lightly upon the late South African War. He was not a Pro-Boer, he said, far from it; but there was points in which he couldn't altogether approve of the action of the Government. Not, he added generously, that he found so much fault with Mester Lansdowne as other folks did do; but still, there was no denyin' that the war hadn't been so very well managed to begin wi'—not to begin wi', it hadn't.

Now was the moment, the listener thought, to plant a few telling remarks on the subject of the foreign policy of the Liberal Party, and to open the eyes of Mr. Adlem to the possible dangers ahead. But Mr. Adlem merely shook his head benignly. There wouldn't be no war, he said, not for years and years; he didn't think so, and thereupon dismissed the subject. As the dinner-hour was at hand, it presently became necessary to dismiss Mr. Adlem himself, and he took his departure with a conquering air, thoroughly satisfied at having quashed all possible arguments, and kindly promising to send round the Education Act on the following morning. This document proved to be a pamphlet written from the Nonconformist point of view, the

extracts given being highly garbled, and, moreover, being supplemented by comments in red ink from the pen of the local minister.

The farmers are for the most part Conservative, though they are not fond of airing their views.

"I crope up an' I crope in, an' I voted, an' crope out again," said one old fellow, with a knowing wink, "an' I went an' ordered a load o' coal at same time, d'ye see!"

He was convulsed with silent mirth as he recalled this Machiavellian stratagem. A group of small boys, hoarse with prolonged shouting and covered with red ribbons, marched past as he was speaking, singing a popular ditty in praise of the Big Loaf.

"Just listen to 'em," remarked the old farmer, "how they do go on, don't they? Sich nonsense! If they put that chap" (the Radical candidate) "into Parliment, it won't make bread no cheaper. If they was to put you into Parliment it wouldn't make it no cheaper. If I was to go into Parliment myself I couldn't make it no cheaper. If ye have a good crop, bread 'ull be cheap. If ye haven't, it 'ull be dear. All th' Parliments i' th' world can't alter that."

Which demonstration proved his accurate comprehension of the point at issue.

This war-cry of the Big Loaf was, nevertheless, a telling one. At a recent South Country election a great effect was produced by the appearance in various bakers' shops of an immense loaf, duly decorated with red ribbons, and bearing a placard adjuring the independent voters of the place to rally round Mr. —— and the Big Loaf. No programme, surely, could be more attractive to a rustic community. They waxed enthusiastic on the subject of Mr. ——. Was not every wall and gate-post plastered with posters inciting folk to "Vote for —— and Cheap Bread! Vote for —— and No Taxes! Vote for —— and the Flag of Freedom!" He was something like a candidate. One old woman remarked to her neighbours on the day of the election that it was nice to see the voters bein driven to the poll in Mr. ——'s carriages, adding: "Whenever the *gentry* lends their carriages ye mid be sure it's for their own ends." As this old dame had lived for many a year on the bounty of the local squire, her astuteness was the more admirable.

Nevertheless, disappointment was in store for the would-be possessors of the Big Loaf. On the day following the return of the Liberal candidate the bakers' shops were fairly besieged, and great was the general indignation and discomfiture. One baker in a certain village lost eight customers through this misapprehension. They were going to the Conservative bread-shop now, they told him. The thing was evidently a swindle. They had voted with all their might for Mr. —— and the Big Loaf, and, lo and behold! bread was no cheaper than before, and the Big Loaf was not forthcoming!

The politics of the rustic voter are in fact mainly inspired by his regard for his pocket. And who can blame him? "A penny means so much to poor folk," one of them said. The commercial prosperity of the country, the interests of the Empire at large, seem far away and insignificant compared with the vital questions of whether tea is going up or down, and whether there will be a rise in flour. Old people who remember "the hungry forties," of which such capital has been made of late, and even other folk who recall more recent times of scarcity and distress, cannot be made to realise that the well-being of the State means the well-being of the individual. One cannot blame them, I say; one cannot expect them to be otherwise than prejudiced, ignorant, narrow-minded. The working man holds his own life and the lives of those dear to him in those toil-worn hands of his; he has either no time for politics, or very imperfectly comprehends them. Nevertheless it is a deplorable fact that Hodge's vote is as valuable as that of any well-informed thinking man; the obstinacy of the old waggoner who won't be bothered to vote, counter-balances the devotion of the invalid who hurries back from Davos in order to attend the poll. Mr. Adlem, whose argument in dealing with the most intricate questions resolves itself into the statement "I don't think so," has a voice in the government of the country; while many young men of education and position, living with their families, are reduced to what cannot but be called subterfuges in order to be registered voters. The system doesn't quite seem to work somehow.

IN THE GARDEN.

SOME BEAUTIFUL ANNUAL FLOWERS.

THE new year is growing old already, and after January is past it is necessary, if the gardener—we use the word in its broadest sense—wishes for beautiful effects in early summer and onward to the eve of Christmas, to think of the things that will bring this beauty to the threshold of the home. Annual flowers are those that bloom the same year as the seed is sown. We sow the seed in March; it springs up as a little shy seedling, and this seedling, under the influence of warm rains and sunny skies, develops into a mature plant bristling with buds. The annual flower is capable of bringing to the garden its richest beauty. A generation ago this type of floral life was regarded as a weed. The Nasturtium, the Golden Marigold, and the Convolvulus

belonged to this renegade group; but the writer loves even these wild and beautiful flowers, which will bring fragrance and colour to the dreary waste and light up the sad poverty-stricken suburban garden which has been from its creation innocent of a vestige of Nature's gifts. We wish to point out a few of the annual flowers that may be regarded as of great usefulness in the garden, not only to look at, but to gather for the house.

THE CHINA ASTER.

One's conception of this Aster, which is really not an Aster at all, but the Callistephus, is a dwarf, squat, dumpy little mound of leaves and flowers, but we are happy in recognising another form of it, the group known, we believe, as Ostrich Plume. Our advice to the gardener who wishes for beautiful effects is to grow this exquisite flower. We sow the seed under glass in February in a shallow pan filled with a soil similar to that used for potting Geraniums. There is some warmth in the greenhouse, and when the seedlings are of sufficient size to pot off singly they are gradually hardened off until they are prepared for exposure out of doors. Where no greenhouse is in existence, or the seed must be sown outdoors, it is possible to flower the China Aster, but the best results come from sowing under glass or on a hotbed. The later development of the China Aster is a memorable one, the dumpy plant having given way, through the influence of fashion, to the free, graceful, finely-coloured group which we call Ostrich Plume. The flowers are reminiscent of those of the Japanese Chrysanthemum, and in the border have a similar effect, big, fluffy masses of petals painted with colours of many hues, here a blood-red crimson, there a mauve, and sometimes a white as pure as a snowflake. We have often asked a friend who knows little of the gardening, but much of the golfing, art whether the Ostrich Plume Aster is a Chrysanthemum or not. The answer is generally "It is a Chrysanthemum."

THE SCABIOUS.

We derived as much pleasure last year from the Scabious as from any annual flower in the garden. We believe the plants are really perennial, that is, live from year to year, but our practice has always been to sow the seed in a shallow pan in March, which is placed on a hotbed, and to transplant from this to the border. We devoted a narrow inconspicuous border to this annual alone last year, and were delighted with the result. The annual Scabious is a flower of exquisite beauty, taller and more graceful than the Scabious of the field, and upon its tall, willowy stems masses of petals are poised, the colours differing according to the varieties selected. There are cream, pure white, mauve, pink, salmon, purple almost passing to black, and many intermediate shades. It is a flower graceful in the garden, and very pleasant to see in some simple vase in the house. Where no hotbed is available, sow the seed in the open ground in April, and remember the oft-repeated advice given in this column not to sow too thickly, and to thin out judiciously and liberally. There is a group called the Tom Thumb Scabious, and by this is meant a very dwarf, pigmy race, and our advice is to have nothing to do with an abortive flower, in which the natural grace of the parent is destroyed.

A MAUVE FLOWER.

We were looking a few days ago at a water-colour drawing of the Madonna Lily and the beautiful mauve-coloured Erigeron, called *Erigeron speciosum superbum*—a happy marriage, the clear whiteness of the Lily accentuating the delightful colouring of its associate. This mingling of colours reminded the writer of the beauty of the Erigeron, no matter where it is placed. The plant grows with the greatest freedom, and flowers for many weeks. It is dwarf in growth, certainly not more than 2 ft. in height, and the flowers always seem determined to hide the leafage. It is a mass of mauve, and in the Royal Gardens, Kew, we have seen large beds filled with this plant alone. It is a pure delight, and a companion through the summer and early autumn.

THE MARIGOLDS.

The common Marigold is regarded by many as a weed. It is the Mark Tapley of the flower garden, and seems happy on the dreariest waste. True, it sows itself everywhere, even scattering golden flowers on a gravel walk; but the prudent gardener is in a position to keep this riotous beauty within bounds. Under restraint we know few more joyous flowers, and of late years there have been improved varieties. Many of our best nurserymen have varieties which may be highly recommended—Orange King in particular, a large, deep orange-coloured flower, which blooms early and remains in bloom until the first frost. A scattering of this in some rough woodland or shrubbery border will give a glint of gold where it is least expected.

THE SHIRLEY POPPY.

Last spring we had in the garden some rough mounds of turf, which were stacked for future use. They were not beautiful to look upon, but a happy thought occurred to us—why not cover these ugly hillocks with Shirley Poppies? The seed was purchased, and in a few weeks a rush of green covered the surface suddenly. A few warm days and life-giving showers had worked a marvellous change. Then from the leafy little forest came nodding buds, followed by a burst of flowers of many colours, gossamer petals of delicate colourings, white sometimes with an edge of softest pink, softest rose, salmon, and the tints of the rainbow. The hillocks became gardens of wonderful beauty, and through sowings of a flower that the Rev. W. Wilks, Vicar of Shirley, raised by discerning in the Poppy of the field certain variations. These were set apart, propagated, and, by rigid selection, we have the world-famous Poppy known as "The Shirley."

THE PORTULACA.

The Portulaca is a flower of the sun. We do not know the character of the summer before us; but if there is a sunny, unclothed spot in the garden, sow seeds of this brilliant annual flower. It should be sown in a border by the edge, because the growth is very dwarf, and the scintillating tints of the flowers must be near one for the remarkable brilliancy and diversity of the colours to be appreciated. There are shades of scarlet, purple, yellow, and even a pure white. Sow the seed at the end of April, and thin out the plants when they are too close together. The object is to form a floral carpet, and this is easily accomplished if the position chosen is sunny and the soil is light but not too dry.



THE old hall of Ragdale, Rakedale, or Wreakdale—for so variously is, or has been, the orthography of the place—has fallen somewhat from its high estate, though it is nowise diminished in its picturesque architectural charm. Its venerable timber, brick and stone, mouldered and worn in their antiquity, its lofty gables and chimneys, and, more than all, its magnificent bays, seem to suggest a world of family history. Once a possession of the great baronial house of Basset—Barons of Weldon, Drayton,

Sapcote, Hedendon, Wycombe, and Colinton—afterwards a seat of the much-ennobled family of Shirley, Ragdale has become a farmhouse, and a place of quaintness and of memories. Manifestly its architectural merit is great, much has the craftsman of the English Renaissance beautified it, and rarely does it group with that ancient church and the tall old churchyard cross. The house stands in a pretty country of middle England, whereof the artist and tourist well knows the green, tree-shadowed lanes, byeways, and old villages. It is an easy thing to fill a sketch-book with attractive things in the vicinity of Ragdale, in this region of the modest river Wreake, from which the place takes its name.

Sir Thomas Shirley, who lived in the reign of Edward III., and through whose marriage with Isabel, daughter of Ralph Basset of Drayton, and ultimate heiress of her brother, the last Baron of Drayton, Ragdale came to that family, is styled by his later namesake, the antiquary, "the great father of the Shirleys, famous in his time for his valour, and for many services rendered to the Kings of England against the French." He is stated to have fought at Crecy and Poictiers, but this is not found in any authoritative evidence, and one of the chief facts known concerning him is that he was pardoned by Edward III. for having done to death one John Wareyne in 1360. His son, Sir Hugh Shirley, who married Beatrix de Braose, ultimate heiress of her brother, Sir John Braose, descended from the great Lords of Bramber, was also a man of might in his time, and a stout adherent of the house of Lancaster. He fell fighting for Henry IV. at the decisive battle of Shrewsbury, and is said to have been one of four knights clothed in the Royal armour who encountered Douglas—"Another king! they grow like hydra's heads!"—and were slain in succession.

We must pass lightly over several genealogical links in order to reach the builder of Ragdale Old Hall as it now exists, with its quaint old Jacobean features and its timber portions of an earlier time. When Sir Ralph Shirley of Staunton Harold died, in 1517, it was numbered with his possessions, and it remained with his descendants, apparently being used as a dower-house or residence for married sons, for it is known that Mr. John Shirley, who had military command in Leicestershire



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THE GREAT BAY.

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THE HALL FROM THE CHURCHYARD.

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in the reign of Elizabeth, and died in the lifetime of his father, lived there. His eldest son, George Shirley, who was a man of great note and a scholar in his time, was sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1603, and was created a baronet in 1611 on the first institution of that dignity, his name being fourth in the order of creation. He chiefly lived at Astwell in Northamptonshire,

By natural decay of its timber, and by the unwarranted depredations of the saltpetre diggers, Ragdale Hall apparently fell into decay; but it was restored, enlarged, and in great part rebuilt by Sir Henry Shirley, second baronet, who died in 1633. Sir Thomas Shirley, the antiquary, his only brother who survived, thus speaks of him: "By the noble education which his father



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IN SHARP PERSPECTIVE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

where he rebuilt the manor house of his mother's family, the Lovetts; but there remains a curious letter of his, in which he complains of the nuisance of saltpetre-digging at Ragdale. He adhered to the old faith and was a great benefactor, and his grievance against the saltpetre-men was that they did not spare the "rooms wherein the poore men did lie," nor "spare to digg upp myne owne dwelling howse there."

gave him, Sir Henry Shirley acquired by the sharpness of his wit, an exact knowledge of the liberal sciences, and from Oxford he was sent for the bettering of his understanding and the gaining of languages, with licence of the King, to travel beyond the seas. Having adorned himself with all the qualities required in a complete gentleman, he returned to his country with the general applause of all, and addressed himself to the



THE OAK ROOM.

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Court of Henry Prince of Wales, and was received with honour by that glorious rising sun, whose death struck his heart with so deep a sorrow that he retired himself into the country to live a solitary life, determining not to think of courtly pomp or glory." In the "Stemmata Shirleiana," by E. P. Shirley, some curious papers are printed relating to him and his quarrels with his

had no more ground to hawk in; that he had a spirit as well as my Lord, and that my Lord should hear from him within three weeks, for no man would deny a gentleman, for I am a gentleman." Finally, however, the choleric baronet withdrew his imputations on the Earl's honour, and was "enlarged."

He occupied the last years of his life in rebuilding Ragdale Hall, which bears all the architectural marks of his time. It is rich in the many quarterings of his ancient family, and something of its heraldic interest is doubtless due to his brother, Sir Thomas Shirley, the antiquary. The house is built partly of brick made on the spot, with some stone, and portions of the more ancient timber and plaster work intermixed. The site is rather remarkable, for the old house abuts somewhat closely upon an unfrequented country road, as will be seen in the pictures, and is very near to the old church and its venerable and remarkable churchyard cross. The principal front of the house faces south, and overlooks the little village below. Over the round-headed entrance doorway are weather-worn shields, with fifty quarterings of the much-dowered family, and above is the crest of the Saracen's head won in the Crusades. Over the great bay on the east is the coat of Shirley impaling Devereux, and over the corresponding one to the west is another shield, too much weather-worn to be intelligible.

Within the house over the parlour chimney-piece are some of the quarterings of Shirley and Devereux—Braose, Milo Earl of Hereford, and Newmarch for the former, and Bourchier, Thomas of Woodstock, and Bohun for the latter. The initials are there of Sir Henry Shirley and Dorothy his wife, daughter of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, and there is the date 1631, with the motto "*Aeterna præpono caducis.*" This interesting room has some splendid enriched panelling, and a curious carved doorway projecting into the room after the manner of an internal porch. The arms of Shirley impaling Devereux are to be seen in several rooms at the east end of the house. The Devereux match brought much honour later to the Shirleys.

In charm of grouping, of structural features, details of adornment, and the rich yet sober hues of the old brick and stone, the place is really superb. There is special interest in the illustration of the porch, admirably revealing all its features. This picture was taken in 1890 to illustrate the "Renaissance Architecture in England" (Batsford), and no photograph can now be taken from the same standpoint in consequence of the growth of the foliage. Ivy partly covers the many quarter-



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THE PORCH.

Leicestershire neighbours aent the right of hawking, which ultimately caused him to be made a prisoner in the Fleet for "scandalising the Earl of Huntingdon." It was averred that he had said: "He cared never for a Lord in England, except the Lord of Hosts; and that it was a fine thing for my Lord to deny him hawking in his ground, and that he was glad my Lord

"COUNTRY LIFE."

ings of the Shirleys, an apple tree overhangs the gateway, and the yews completely block up the entrance shown here. The recent picture of the east front tells to what extent this is the case, and how rapid is the growth even of the immemorial yew within the space of fifteen years. We see also how much may be lost through suffering ivy and trees to conceal, and sometimes to



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EAST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

destroy, the really interesting features of old dwelling-places. Sir Robert Shirley, the seventh baronet (son of the fourth, and successor of his nephew, the sixth baronet), was a gentleman much noted and highly honoured in his time. Born in 1650, he became, through the Devereux match, one of the co-heirs of several ancient titles, and amongst them of the Barony of Ferrers, which, by favour of the King, in 1677, was called out of abeyance, and gave him that title with the precedence of 1299. Other honours came to him later on, for, being in high favour, and one of the Lords of Council, he was created Viscount Tamworth and Earl Ferrers in 1711. Ragdale was not any more the principal residence of the family, but the western part of it was to some extent modernised and fitted up as a hunting seat by Robert Earl

Ferrers towards the end of the eighteenth century. The seventh earl, a nobleman of elevated tastes, much interested in antiquities, who died in 1827, alienated the Bassett properties, including Ragdale, from the rest of the family possessions, and left them by will to Caroline Shirley, daughter of his son Sewallis Viscount Tamworth. This lady married, in 1837, Lorenzo Sforza, Duke of Sforza-Cesarini, near Rome, and the present Duke, the representative of an illustrious Italian house, is lord of the manor and principal landowner of this old English place. He has great interest in this possession, but Ragdale Old Hall is no longer the residence of the territorial magnate of the place. The Duchess of Sforza-Cesarini restored the old church of Ragdale in 1874.



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OLD RAGDALE CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

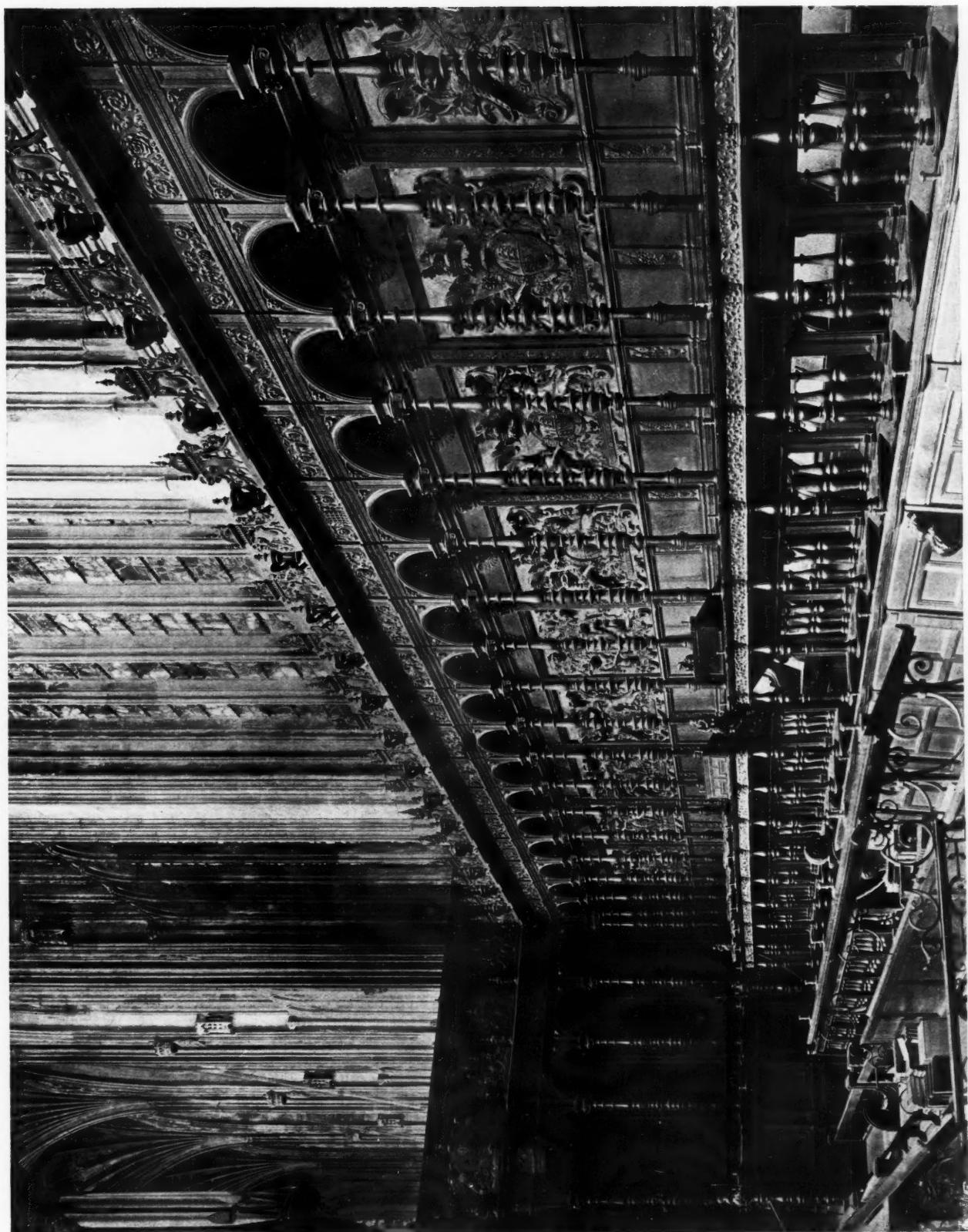
KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL.

THE court of King's College is dominated by the great chapel which lies on its north side. The history of the college yields in interest to that of its greatest building. Nor is this any injustice to a foundation which has loyally fulfilled for more than 450 years its Royal Founder's intention, by training men for the "encresce of vertues, and kunnyng in dilatacion and stablisshement of christen feith" (the Royal spelling is preserved). No college history, however brilliant, could quite equal the interest of a building which is unequalled in the two Universities, which remains the grandest example of its style of architecture, and which has preserved in its windows a unique specimen of what English artists could do in the early sixteenth century.

And the history of the building has been varied and eventful

enough to match the final result. Begun by Henry VI. in 1446, the troubled times of that monarch prevented him from doing much more than giving the site and the design. He had ordered in his famous "will" that £1,000 a year should be paid from the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster for twenty years, and longer, if necessary, for the "edificacions and werkes" at King's, which were to be "fully perfourmed and accomplished in more notable wise than any of my said roiaume of England"; but only a little more than £1,000 was spent in the first four years. Then the troubles of the Wars of the Roses stopped the work completely. There is a pathetic interest in the defence which his overseer, Robert Wodelarke, one of the six original fellows, and afterwards the founder of St. Catherine's College, left behind him for the posthumous defence of his character. It



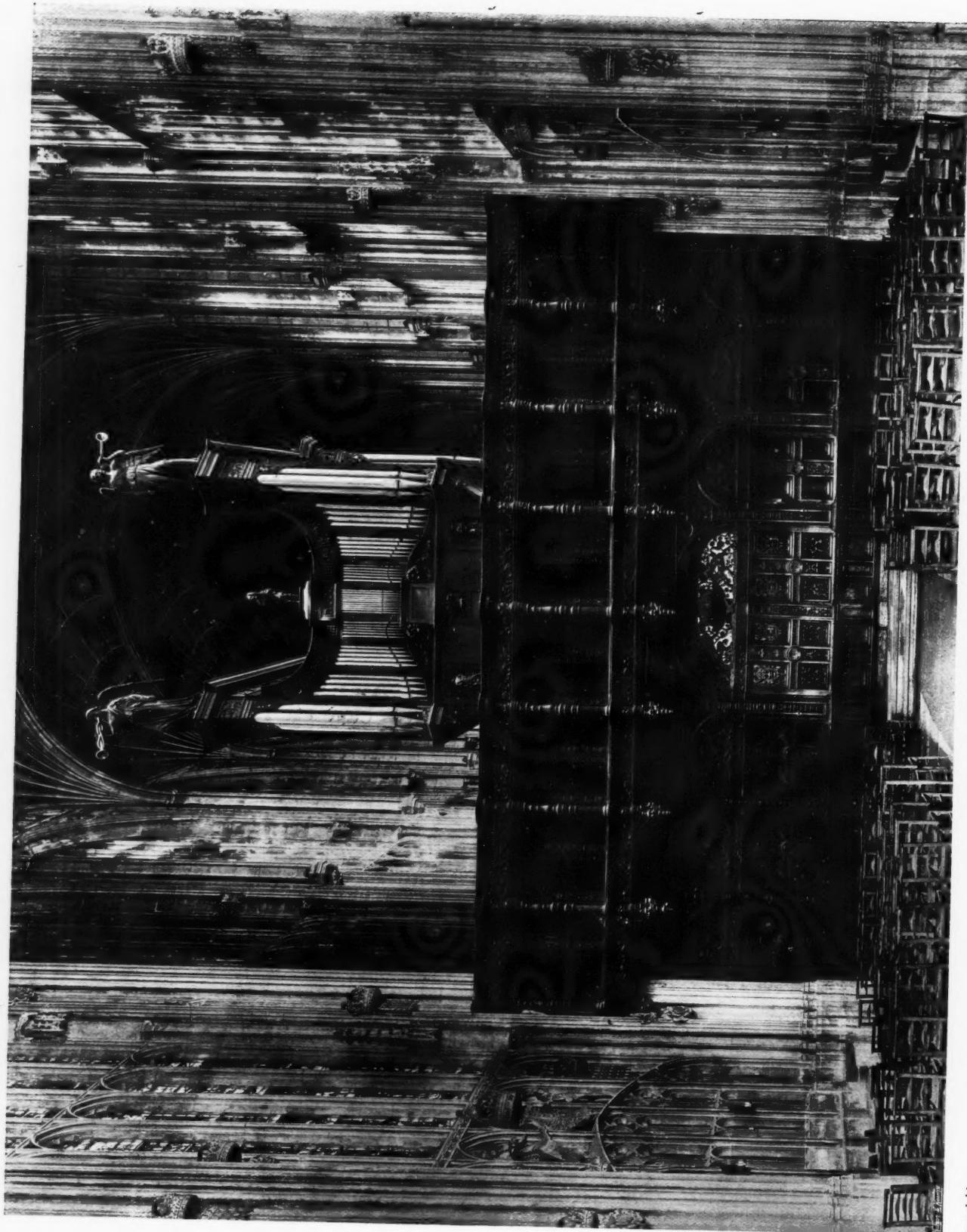


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THE CHOIR STALLS, NORTH SIDE.

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[Jan. 27th, 1906



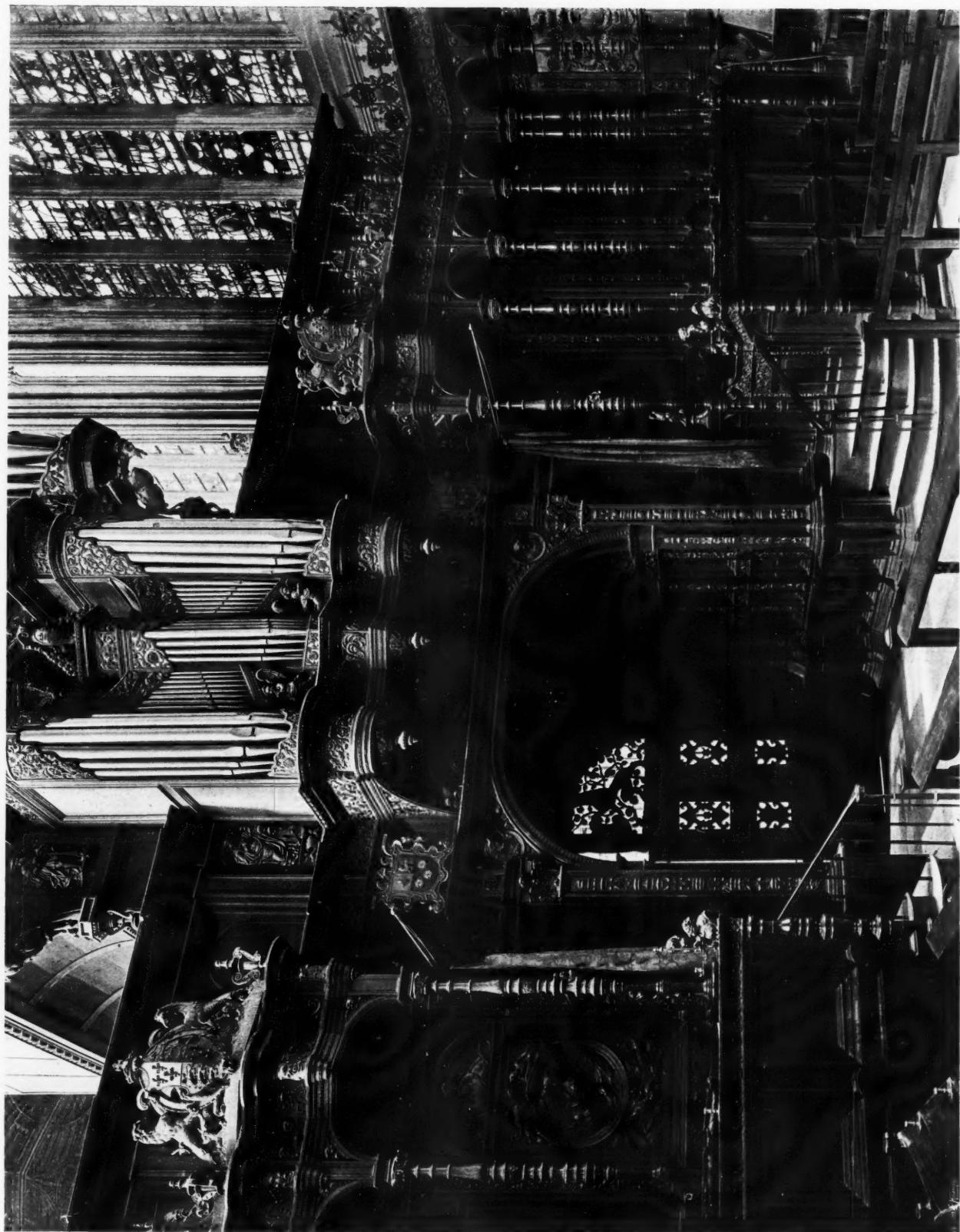
THE ROOD-SCREEN, WEST SIDE.

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THE ROOD-SCREEN AND ORGAN, EAST SIDE.

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seems that he had been accused of embezzling the funds, but the explanation he gives of the cessation of the work is more than sufficient. When King Henry was taken prisoner at St. Albans in 1455 by the great Earls of Salisbury and Warwick (the famous King-maker), his captors pledged their word to the King that they would hasten the completion of the church, and that money should not fail, "a compact to which the King had much pleasure in assenting." "At first these honourable gentlemen fulfilled their promises with much friendship"; but soon the money ceased to come in, and when the work was stopped poor Wodelarke was "adjudicated by the auditor" to have been more than £200 out of pocket. The good fortune of the King's Chapel, however, exceeded that of its founder. Edward IV. resumed the work in 1477, and Richard III., excellent in all respects as a king except in the manner in which he won and kept his throne, ordered the building to be pushed on with all despatch, and that workmen should be "pressed" for it. He himself gave £700 within seven months. But the glory of King's was to belong to the House of Lancaster after all, and not to the usurper. Henry VII. spent his reign in accumulating a vast treasure, but as his end drew near, "out of virtuous disposition for the weal of his soul, and the singular trust he hath to the prayers of his said blessed uncle" (*i.e.*, Henry VI.), he gave more than £5,000, and left a similar sum for the completion of the work. Thus the good that Henry VI. did live after him, and by a rare piece of good fortune his great plan was carried out according to his design; the chapel was built almost exactly of the dimensions which he had prescribed, *i.e.*, it is 289ft. long within, 40ft. wide, and 94ft. "unto the crest of the battlement"; the height inside is 80ft. One more Royal person was to have a hand in the work. While the executors of the late King were completing and glazing the chapel, King Henry VIII. was presenting pavement, and inserting the beautiful screen and the stalls in the choir (their canopies are later). The initials and arms of Anne Boleyn serve to date the work and give a pathetic interest to the carving, which in itself is some of the most beautiful of the period. The whole work was completed in 1536, just ninety years after the foundation-stone was laid. The style of King's College Chapel has been censured by many Gothic purists; Mr. Ruskin irreverently compared it to an overturned stool with its legs in the air, and there is no doubt a sameness in the repetition, bay after bay, of the same design; even the stone ornaments, the crowns, roses, and portcullises, with the greyhounds and antelopes supporting shields, are constantly repeated. But the effect of this monotony, if it must be so called, is very impressive; it gives an idea of unity of design, (it may even be said) a proud confidence in the building itself, that it was planned perfect and needed no development. The roof, too, is a marvel of fan tracery, revealing and yet concealing the perfect balance of its architectural construction. And it must never be forgotten—it is not likely to be forgotten at King's—that the chapel was constructed to give the greatest possible space for the display of magnificent stained glass. The insertion of this was begun in 1516, under the direction of Bishop Foxe of Winchester, one of Henry VII.'s executors, who was in this year founding his own college of Corpus at Oxford; it was apparently completed by 1531. There are twelve windows on each side, making, with the big east and west windows, twenty-six in all. The side windows tell in their lower lights the whole gospel story, with the story of the Virgin and of the Acts of the Apostles; the upper lights give the corresponding "types," which are sometimes drawn from the Apocrypha, or even from secular literature; *e.g.*, in the second window on the north side the Presentation of the Virgin is balanced by the Presentation of the Golden Tablet in the Temple of the Sun, and the Marriage of Joseph and Mary has its type in the Marriage of Tobit and Sara. The east window contains the Crucifixion, the west window the Last Judgment (but this is a modern insertion by Clayton and Bell). The windows were to be "after the form, manner, curiosity, and cleanliness in every point" of the windows in the King's new chapel at Westminster. These last have perished; how the King's Chapel windows survived the Puritan occupation of Cambridge in 1643 has always been a puzzle. The old story was that they were taken down and hidden, and even the place of their concealment was shown; but neither the windows themselves nor the "Mundum books" of the college show any trace of such a desperate remedy. Nor does the tradition that they owed their preservation to the influence of the intruded provost, Benjamin Whichcot, the great Cambridge Platonist, bear the test of chronology; his goodness of heart saved his fellows from being forced to take the covenant, and secured half his stipend to his ejected predecessor; but he was not even appointed at the time when the danger to the windows was most acute. Perhaps the entry in the college books of a "payment of 6/8 to Master Dowzing," who was going about the country "like a Bedlam breaking glass windows," may explain the matter; if so, never was money better spent. Mr. Dowzing's diary records, in a style as "bedlamite" as his proceedings: "King's College Dec 26" (1643) "Steps to be taken and 1000 superstitious pictures the ladder of Christ and thieves to go upon many crosses Jesus write on them." The total absence of

punctuation gives a terrible vagueness to this awful threat, but it was never carried out.

It was in this chapel, when its glass and carving were still fresh, that Queen Elizabeth was welcomed on her visit to Cambridge in 1564. She was received at the west door by the public orator, who delivered half-an-hour's oration, "while the Queen's horse was curveting under her," and the Queen herself making remarks; when his praise was too strong even for Tudor taste, she interrupted "Non est veritas," and "Utinam"; "but when he praised virginity, she bid him continue." Next day the Queen, in her most magnificent dress, heard a Latin sermon in the chapel on the text "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," of which she said she "thought she should never hear a better"; and in the evening the "Aulularia" of Plautus was acted in the ante-chapel, "which she stayed out," though it lasted till midnight. The Queen, like all her subjects, had an unbounded love of sermons and stage plays.

Although Milton was not a King's man, it seems absolutely certain that the chapel of that college was in his mind when he wrote of

"Storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light;
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high and anthem clear."

Milton is only the poetic voice of countless thousands who have felt the service at King's

"Dissolve (them) into ecstacies
And bring all heaven before their eyes."

One other name must be especially mentioned in connection with the chapel at King's, that of the pious Charles Simeon, who lies buried in the chapel of the college of which he had been a resident member for more than fifty years, and from which he had profoundly influenced the religious life of Cambridge and England. In his case the chapel has a special interest, for it was the statutable requirement that he should receive the Holy Communion which first made him, a thoughtless young scholar just up from Eton, think seriously of religious things, and so led to his conversion. But though King's Chapel is the glory of the college, it is not the whole college. By what seems a strange act of impiety the provost and fellows in 1829 sold their original buildings, which lay on the north side of the chapel, to the university; they were pulled down to make room for the new University Library. Hence the residential part of King's belongs to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The design of King's, with its conjoint foundation at Eton, was unquestionably suggested by the "two St. Mary Winton Colleges" of William of Wykeham; and like the Oxford Wykehamists the King's men enjoyed till fifty years ago the privilege of exemption from the ordinary degree examinations of their university. Waynflete, who may well have been a New College man, and who certainly was head-master of Winchester, was made by Henry VI. first head-master of Eton, and was given special charge of his building works, "considering his grete discretion, his high thought and fervent zele." Waynflete seems in every way to have been worthy of the Royal trust. King's repaid this debt to Oxford by training an Oxford College founder in Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York, and later, in Richard Cox, the first Dean of Christ Church; he was one of those Lutherans who caused Warham to say "then is Cambridge the cause of the downfall of Oxford."

It is rather in the production of statesmen and men of affairs that King's has shone. Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir Robert Walpole, Charles, Viscount Townshend, whose nickname, "Turnip," is his greatest honour, and the great Lord Camden are names that any college would rank high on its roll. Sir Robert Walpole, although it must be confessed that the register was falsified to enable him to obtain an Eton Scholarship, never forgot his old foundation, which had helped him when he was only a younger son; he gave money liberally to the new buildings, which he humorously called "paying for my board," and he sent Horace Walpole to his old college. Perhaps he owed to King's some of that taste for the fine arts which is so pleasant a contrast to the genius for finance and political management that is his main feature. But, after all, the men of genius that a college sends forth are accidents; it is in its influence on its ordinary men that its real work lies, for them it can help to make or mar, and through them it can serve its founder's purposes. Even here it is impossible to appraise exactly by statistics the life of a college, whether in the past or the present; Wordsworth expressed this well when he wrote of the chapel of King's:

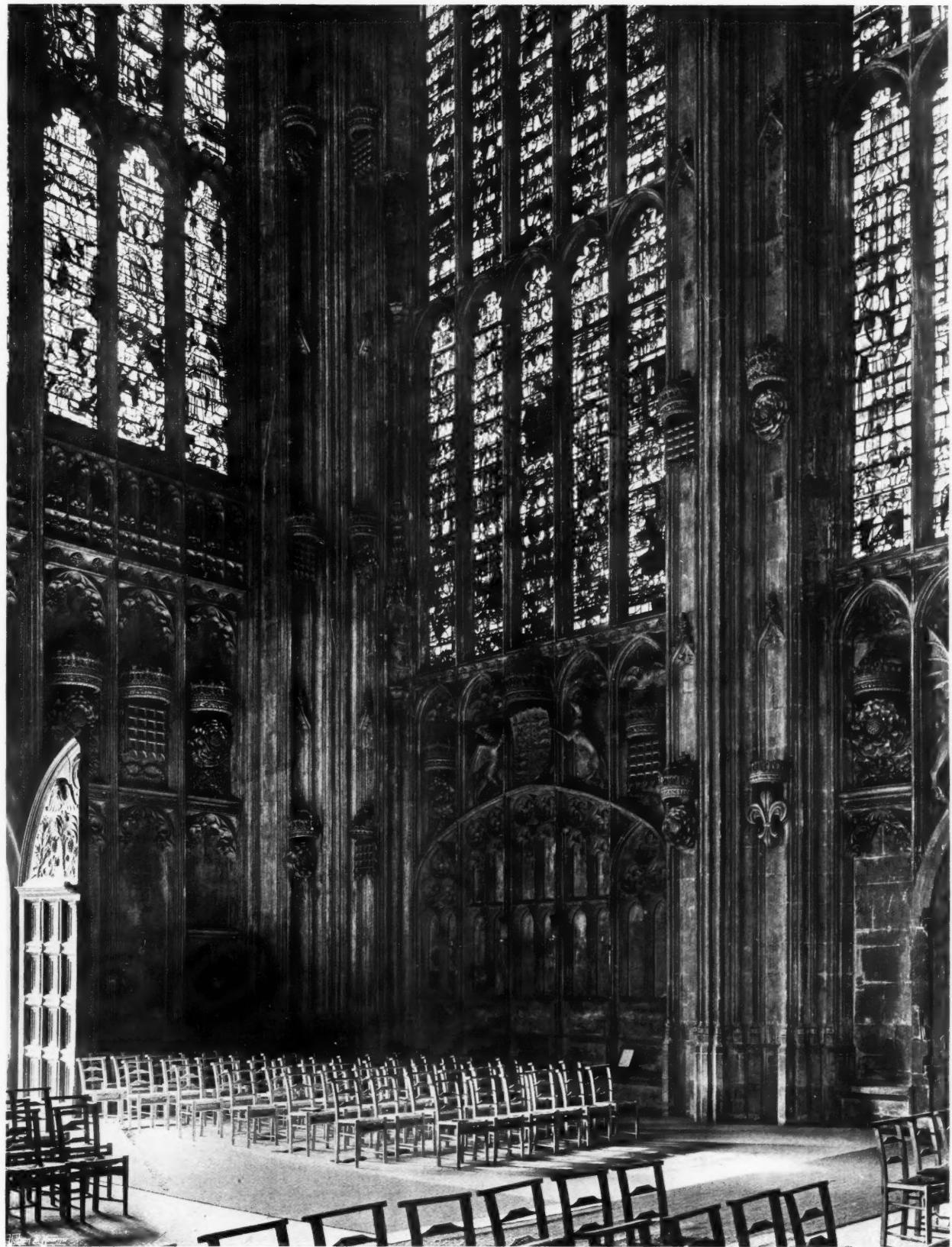
"High heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof,
Self poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality."

J. WELLS.

Jan. 27th, 1906.]

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KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL—THE WEST END.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE LONG-EARED OWL.

THE long-eared owl, though common in many parts, is not nearly so widely distributed as the two commoner sorts. It is more or less local, being only found in fir woods. Where there are large spaces covered with fir forests the long-eared owl is generally abundant, but where these are absent you may look for it in vain.

Instead of nesting in the holes of trees, buildings or rocks, as do the tawny and barn owls, it prefers to use the old nest of a crow, wood-pigeon, heron, or squirrel, and on this rough platform the eggs are laid very early in the year, sometimes while snow lies thick on the ground. Very occasionally these birds have nested on the ground, and in a contemporary there lately appeared a most interesting photograph of a long-eared owl sitting with her young ones on a nest actually on the ground. I would have given something to have taken such a picture as that. They are always exceedingly close sitters, which makes it very difficult to locate their nests, as they refuse to leave them on the trunk of the tree being struck. Nothing less than the nest itself being actually struck by a large stone will make them move or leave their eggs. As the fir woods are always full of old nests, it is impossible in a day's search to climb to every one seen. Three of us once, in a large wood inhabited by these owls, climbed one day nearly thirty fir trees to no purpose, though in several cases we found the castings on the ground.



R. B. Ledge.

THE LONG-EARED OWL.

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examined in a dead specimen by lifting up the edge of the facial disc, which is quite loose, and covers the ear like a flap or shield.

The most richly marked and coloured long-eared owl I have ever seen was in the Zoological Gardens a short time ago; the



G. A. Booth.

OWLETS THREE WEEKS OLD.

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All owls have the power of altering completely the whole shape of their face. By muscular contraction the feathers of the facial disc can be made either round or triangular; the long-eared and short-eared can besides depress or erect their "ears," and they and the tawny owl are furnished with a moustache of wiry hair-like feathers of a tawny colour, which can also be erected or depressed at the will of the bird, thus completely altering its appearance. These peculiarities of facial expression are very seldom done justice to by artists, and are too often ignored altogether. But if photography scores in this respect, it fails altogether in rendering the wonderful eyes of the long-eared owl, the glorious orange yellow iris being rendered by the photographic plate as black (the orthochromatic plate even being useless in the exposure necessary for a living bird), while the pupil, though it appears black, has a lot of dark blue in it, and reflects so much light as to come out white. The whole eye is thus absolutely reversed in tone. It should hardly be necessary to point out that the so-called "ears" are not really ears, being merely ornamental in nature, and are in no way connected with the organs of hearing. These are exceedingly large and complicated, occupying the whole side of the head, and can be readily

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dark markings of this bird were almost black, and the breast feathers were strongly-contrasted streaks of white, tawny, and black. Its two companions were not nearly so handsome. The young birds are very dusky, especially about the face, and like all owls have most voracious appetites, which must tax the parents' energies to the utmost extent to keep them satisfied while they are in the nest, especially as they are dependent upon the old birds for a considerable time.

This owl neither hoots nor screeches, and is in fact very silent. Mr. Howard, the writer of the account already alluded to of the nest on the ground, says that the hen, when alarmed by his proximity to the young, uttered a hoarse "wack-wack." I have never heard the bird make a sound, except a snapping of the beak, though I have kept one in captivity for over a year, finally releasing it in my neighbourhood. I fear, though, it was too tame to survive very long, though I never heard of one being killed, and I did hear soon afterwards of one being seen about. There is none here, so that in all probability it would wander away to a more suitable neighbourhood in search of others of its own species.

R. B. L.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE PTARMIGAN.

ALWAYS a charmingly pretty bird, the ptarmigan is perhaps most beautiful of all in midwinter, and in complete harmony with the snowy wastes which are its home. With the exception of its bill, and part of the tail, the bird at this season is spotlessly white, and, as it is very rarely that it sees man during winter, is usually very confiding. While climbing the Cairngorms this new year I noticed that ptarmigan were very plentiful on the shores of Loch Etchachan—the second highest loch in Great Britain—which lies 3,000ft. above sea level beneath the precipices of Ben Muick Dhui. The ptarmigan's deep croak is, even in the brightest sunshine, a very weird and mournful sound, but in order that the ornithologist may appreciate it to the full it must be heard amidst the driving mist and snow of a midwinter's storm. Then there is an eeriness about the sound which is quite uncanny, but at the same time it is fitting that a bird inhabiting these desolate mountain lands should have such a cry. Although the ptarmigan's haunts may be covered with snow, and the moorlands lying beneath them be quite clear, still they disdain to leave the snow wastes, and their footmarks may be seen on the powdery snow where they have been searching for a meal. Should these tracks be followed, it will be found as a rule that they cease amongst the heath appearing from the snow behind the shelter of some rock and where the ptarmigan have been feeding. When seen against the sun the ptarmigan's plumage is quite dazzling, seeming almost whiter than the snow-covered ground over which it is flying. The ptarmigan seems to dislike a strong wind, especially if the temperature be 15deg. or so below freezing, and one may usually count on flushing one or two on the leeward side of a hill, sometimes only 100ft. or so from the summit. Then it usually rises, facing the wind, and swerving gradually before it ends by flying down wind at express speed. The ptarmigan has two different notes: the alarm call—not so very unlike that of its near relative the red grouse—which it utters when flushed, and another note uttered while the ptarmigan stands amidst the snow or heath, which is a very long-drawn "croak." The sound is kept up for quite 10sec. without a break, and is very deceptive. One moment you may imagine the bird is somewhere to your right, the next the call comes from quite the opposite direction. Then the ptarmigan has also the power of making his cry appear quite near one moment and far off the next. The bird does not seem to call while running or walking along the ground, but stops just before he uses his note, standing erect, after the manner of a crowing cock, and you can see his bill opening and shutting while his "song" is in progress. Sometimes his call resembles nothing so much as the winding of a clock. A certain Scottish naturalist has actually asserted that the ptarmigan's title of *Lagopus mutus* is an appropriate one—in fact, that the ptarmigan is a bird without a call note. Three hours on the Cairngorms ought to convince him of his mistake.

GOLDEN EAGLE AND PTARMIGAN.

What a difference is there between these two birds! The one gentle, confiding, and unobtrusive, the other strong, defiant, alert, and for ever soaring over the mountains on the eager look-out for prey. What a toll it takes of the ptarmigan from one year's end to another, especially in spring, when there are two hungry eaglets in the eyrie waiting to be fed! At this season a pair of ptarmigan at least are accounted for daily. When one sees a covey of ptarmigan flying down wind at express speed, it is difficult to imagine how the eagle overtakes them. But overtakes them it does with the greatest of ease, and with a blow from its wing hurls a luckless bird to the ground below. A strange thing happened amongst the Cairngorms recently. A pair of golden eagles were soaring overhead, when one gave chase to some ptarmigan and struck one down; before the ptarmigan had time to reach the ground, however, the second eagle swooped down and caught it, thus depriving the rightful owner of its booty. Surely these could not have been mated birds! The golden eagle sometimes captures ptarmigan almost, it seems, for the mere pleasure of doing so, and then has a little game with its luckless prey. Soaring to a great height, it drops the ptarmigan from its talons and soars away as if paying no attention to it; then suddenly swooping earthwards with terrific speed it seizes the bird before it has time to fall to ground, and soars upwards to repeat the operation until tired of this form of sport. A keeper friend of mine was once following a wounded stag on the hills, and at last he got in another shot at him as he was crossing a stream, which laid him *hors de combat* in the water. While engaged in bleeding the stag, the keeper was startled to hear a tremendous splash in the stream. Thinking someone was throwing stones from the hillside, he looked up and saw a golden eagle not 3ft. from his head. When the eagle perceived the keeper,

it immediately soared upwards. Half under the stag the keeper found the body of a ptarmigan freshly killed, and with the marks of the eagle's talons on it. Evidently the eagle had been amusing itself with its prey, and had noticed the keeper just when in the act of overtaking the ptarmigan as it was falling. One day the same keeper was walking across the moorlands, when suddenly he came upon the body of a hare in the snow. This in itself was not surprising, but what astonished him was the entire absence of any footmarks near it. Just then he noticed an eagle hovering motionless overhead, which no doubt had just dropped the hare, and was afraid to swoop after it. The golden eagle, I think, prefers mountain hares to ptarmigan, but these are now very scarce on the hills where the eagles nest. In fact, one may walk for days without noting a single hare. This scarcity is probably due to the golden eagle, as on one hill that I know of, 3,000ft. in height and quite ten miles from the nearest eyrie, the mountain hare is met with in very great abundance, and one may count upon seeing well on to 100 of them during an ascent of the hill.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE AND ITS CONFRERES.

The golden eagle rarely if ever will attack the grey or hoodie crow, although the latter will mob it without mercy. Whether it is because the eagle dislikes the flesh of carrion-eating birds, or whether it is unwilling to attack anything feeding to a certain extent like itself on the carcasses of deer and sheep, is uncertain. Be this as it may, the eagle will take not the slightest notice, although quite a crowd of angry hoodies are attacking it with angry cries. The eagle and the fox seem to have a mutual respect for each other, and in connection with this a curious thing happened not long ago in a district where foxes and golden eagles are both left undisturbed. One evening a fox chanced to be sleeping on a part of the moor where a golden eagle was in the habit of resting after the chase. The eagle, unconscious that the fox had already taken possession, winged its way lazily along the heather, with a ptarmigan in its talons, until it reached its resting-place. Not dreaming to find it already occupied, the eagle dropped down, and was just going to alight and enjoy its meal, when all at once it suddenly caught sight of the fox a foot or two from it. This sudden apparition was too much even for the nerves of an eagle, and up it shot into the sky. The fox half awoke, and looked dazedly at the eagle, as if unable to believe its senses. Then, evidently believing that it had been the victim of an optical delusion, it calmly turned over on its side and resumed its sleep!

The fox has more than usual intelligence, and, should one of them come upon the remains of an animal too large for it to carry, it will go off and return with a companion to help it with its load, and they have been known to drag a roe deer a considerable distance. The fox will pursue rabbits and hares, but prefers to lie in wait for them, and pounce on them unawares. The fox picks its footsteps with the greatest care, and its footmarks look very graceful in the freshly-fallen snow, in comparison with the tracks of the white hare, which look clumsy indeed.

THE OPEN WINTER.

So far, up to the date of writing, we have had a very open winter, with hardly any snow, and already some of the birds are thinking of spring. On December 26, a mild misty day, I heard a missel-thrush in full song, which is by far the earliest date I have ever heard one singing. As last spring I did not hear the first missel-thrush till March 1st, my readers can see how much earlier than usual he has begun his song; also the grey crows are looking for a nesting site, I think. In England I believe the song-thrush is sometimes in song throughout the winter, but I have never known this to be the case in our part of the world. The only birds that are to be heard here in the winter are the robin and starling, and sometimes the brown wren. We have a very large rookery near us, and see the rooks returning home in immense flocks every afternoon. A few days ago I was surprised to see them returning quite half-an-hour earlier than usual. At that time (about 2.30) there was not a breath of wind stirring, and the rooks were flying with the greatest of ease. By 3 p.m., however, quite a strong wind had sprung up, and the few rooks that were going homewards were having a rough time of it. Surely the rooks were aware of the coming wind, and had returned earlier on that account.

SETON P. GORDON.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"**A**LL the pragmatic characteristics of biographers are of little value compared with the naïve details of a great life." In the words of the greatest German man of letters will be found the germ of a doctrine that has in England been applied with great vigour. They form the motto of *The Life of Goethe* (Putnam), by Albert Bielschowsky, which has been translated by William A. Cooper, M.A. As Goethe's name is the most familiar in this country of all continental writers, it may be interesting to bestow a little attention on the main details here set forth. It is no exaggeration to say that Goethe was the greatest writer of the nineteenth century, and the true hero worshipper will ever bear that in mind when there are brought before him the foibles and frailties of an intellect and character slowly and painfully developed. What gives charm and interest to a perusal of this, the first of three volumes, is that, in the words of Klopstock, Goethe was "the most humane of men." In other words, his mind was surcharged with the sympathies, interests, hopes, and ideals common to all men. His tenderness was that of a woman, yet he was a master of outdoor pursuits, a mountain climber, a skater—one who in winter loved naked to plunge into the cold waters of Elm. His poetry often carried him into the very ether; but he was an excellent judge of wine. A lover of what is old, he was still filled with the spirit of his own age. To study the making of such a man must surely be enthralling.

Frankfort-on-the-Main was his birthplace, at a time (1784) when it still possessed the characteristics of a mediaeval city, a

walled and moated town, with ramparts, where the mansions, castellated like fortresses, and the grey monastery walls told of turbulence and gloom. The mass of labourers were still without legal protection, the merchants were formed into guilds, and above all were the patricians. On the maternal side Goethe was descended from a family of scholars and officials, chief among whom was his grandfather, Johann Wolfgang Textor, an old man who was once chief magistrate of the city, and gifted in popular esteem with what the Scotch call "second sight." On the paternal side his grandfather was the thrifty son of a farrier, who, after making some money as a tailor, took an inn, and as "mine host" converted his savings into a fortune. He was then, in popular language, enabled to make his son a gentleman, and Goethe's father was a doctor of jurisprudence, and both a travelled and a learned man. Thus the poet cannot be called unhappy in the circumstances of his birth. He was regarded in his own day as an aristocrat—an epithet to which, in any case, he would have been entitled by his appearance and accomplishments. At fifteen began the first of the many love affairs that were to lend colour to his life. The heroine of it was Gretchen, who saved him from a broken heart by declaring when brought to account that she had always regarded Goethe as a mere child, an explanation that so stung his young pride that he could no longer mourn the loss of so disdainful a mistress. The next affair of the heart was more serious. By the time it occurred he had gone to Leipzig as a student, had laid aside the provincial hodge-podge of home, and flourished forth as a butterfly of fashion. His friend Horn wrote home :

All his habits and his whole bearing are as different at present from his former conduct as day is from night. His pride has made him a fop, and his clothes, with all their beauty, are in such foolish taste that he is the most conspicuous person in the whole University.

It was in his second semester that he first met Anna Katherine Schönkopf, nicknamed Kätkchen, but called by Goethe Annchen or Annette. She appears to have been an amiable and exceptionally pretty girl :

Goethe loved her with the ardour and seriousness of an honest optimistic youth, and yet from the very beginning of his passion he is conscious that she can never become his wife.

One author gives a long explanation of Goethe's attitude, but it is really clear without it. Here was an affair of lad and lass; but unfortunately for the lass, the lad was big with the sense of destiny that is born of genius. Had he been no genius at all, he might still have been excused for not contemplating setting up house at the age of seventeen. Later in life, he somewhat exaggerated the proportions of the affair, but that is no uncommon case with imaginative writers who turn their experience into copy. His ups and downs, his depressions and sadnesses, his jealousies and the rest, all come naturally enough at a time when we expect to see a youth of seventeen or eighteen "sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow." The innocent episode lasted some two years, and ended, as so many youthful love affairs have done before and since, in smoke. In due time Kätkchen became affianced to Dr. Kanne, and no doubt was happier with him than she would have been with her more brilliant first love. But it must not be supposed that the intellectual development of Goethe was checked by his flirtation. At twenty-two we find him madly in love with Frederika of Sessenheim, but the very quality of the verses addressed by him to her shows how the poet's soul had been struggling towards expression :

So liebt die Lerche,
Gesang und Luft
Und Morgenblumen
Den Himmelsduft.

Still it was all a dream to him, but reality to her. The separation nearly cost Frederika her life, but it was inevitable. But she left behind the sweetest memory, and she found a place in his work :

From the two Marys in "Gotz" and "Clavigo" she ascends gradually till she reaches in Gretchen her heavenly transfiguration.

In his next love affair he was to touch upon more dangerous ground. Lotte was the affianced of his friend Kestner, and it says much for all the three parties concerned that friendship was never strained to the breaking point. The next affair, that with the wife of Bravlaw, marked a further advance along the same road; but the quarrel which ended it seems to have afforded the writer a clue to the second part of "Werther," on which he at the time was engaged. We may add that it gives point to Thackeray's delicious lines :

Charlotte, when she saw his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter.

It is not possible here to follow the course of Goethe's love affairs until we come to Frau von Stein, and it is rendered the more unnecessary because what we have already said will illustrate the character of the poet as far as these matters are concerned. The whole subject is full of controversial matter, and it

would be vain and useless to attempt to judge a man of genius from the standard usually set up for an ordinary citizen. The merit of the biographer is that he has, in a most complete and satisfactory manner, shown how much of those experiences is reflected in the poet's work. He might be in love or he might not be, but the character of the woman who had fascinated him for the time being seems invariably to have so impressed his mind, that she comes out later in a full and perfect photograph. Indeed, it may be said that our attention to this side of his character has kept us from giving the amount of consideration which was due to the quiet unfolding of his intellect that was going on while the affairs were in progress. It is no exaggeration to say that before the advent of Wolfgang Goethe, there was no literature in Germany worthy of the name. A band of young men got together in what was commonly known as the *Sturm und Drang* period. They set themselves with might and main to combat the milk-and-water stuff then emanating from the printing press of Germany. At the beginning, no doubt, they went to great extremes, as Goethe himself did in his love of Nature; but for all that, the movement was as strong and wholesome as any of which there is any record. Goethe himself advanced slowly yet steadily in the right direction. At first even his style was tintured by the traditions of the country in which he lived; but gradually he came to see that to be direct and natural ought to be the first object of every writer. In succeeding volumes no doubt we shall see the influence traced out in all its manifold developments; but even as far as this goes—and it ends with the Italian journey—we already find that the German poet has got hold of the elementary principles of composition. That is to say, he has forsaken sentimentalism and sentences overcharged with epithet, which were characteristics of the older German writers. He begins to understand that good writing is not a reflection or copy of what has been done before, but the result of direct and clear observation of Nature. In considering the later volumes it will be more convenient to deal with the philosophy of composition as exemplified in the work of the greatest of the German poets. So far we have done nothing except to notice some of the native incidents in a great career.

PEAT AND PEAT FIRES.

HOWEVER much we among the hills may regret the passing of the old hearth fire, with its wholesome smell of peat, its generous emission of heat, and its atmosphere of simple, genial comfort, our love for this form of the picturesque will have to be sacrificed upon the altar of utility, for the housewife demands modern time-saving conveniences. Other factors which have contributed



C. E. Walmsley. A PEAT-WORKER'S COTTAGE. Copyright.

to the disuse of peat among the hills are the comparatively small area of the peat moss, the uncertainty of the peats drying, owing to the prevalence of rain and soaking mists, the conviction of the farmers that they and their men can be more profitably employed, and the greater adaptability of coal. Hearth fires are still to be found in out-of-the-way places, but so renovated out of all likeness to themselves as to be well-nigh unrecognisable. The



C. E. Walmsley.

LOADING UP.

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fuel burnt is wood, not peat. To find a perfect specimen in the Lake District would necessitate a long quest. We know of one which is unique because of its spaciousness. When speaking of its size to strangers, the farmers declare humorously that, during a severe winter, the half of a tree was hauled into the kitchen by a horse, and levered upon the iron dogs. At the end of three days, an owl, which had sought sanctuary in a cleft in the tree, mistook the radiating heat for a change in the weather, and flew out and through the open door. In this farmhouse the fire was kept burning for fifty years without a break. We do not wonder that it was as jealously guarded as an altar light when we examine the ancient tinder-box, with its flint and steel and hemp, which is still upon the mantel-shelf, and realise the trouble involved in obtaining a light by such primitive means. Where peats are the fuel burnt, it is still customary at night to place one in the centre of the hearth and pile the ash around it, so that there may be a fire in the morning. Hearth fires, however, are by no means uncommon in the valleys bordering on the Westmorland fells, such as Winster, Lyth, and Furness. Even here, slowly, but surely, they are being replaced by modern grates for burning coal. The general opinion of the farmers seems to be that, after taking into consideration the cost of labour and cartage, peats are as costly as coal, and not so good. Meantime, their proximity to beds of rich peat moss will safeguard some of them, especially in the cottages, against alteration for a number of years. On these mosses in the Furness valley, any time between April and July, the peat-workers may be seen busily engaged. They work in groups of three—a graver and two wheelers. The graver alone needs skill. There is no hesitation as he measures with his eye the right length and depth of moss to form the peats, and cuts and piles with marvellous dexterity the chocolate-like slabs for the wheelers to spread in the sun. At intervals, governed by the state of the weather, the slabs are turned, like cheeses, to cook. When dry enough to be handled without breaking they are built into windrows, so that the sun and wind may have full play upon them, and complete the process of drying. They are then stacked ready for cartage.

The only female we saw was one of a group working and housing peats for sale. She was the sister of the graver, and easily kept pace with her comrade wheeler, and, according to her own testimony, enjoyed the untrammelled out-of-doors life. Commenting upon this fact to a farmer, he replied, "Aye, but it is seldom you can git a lass to work in t' fields nowadays; a bicycle's mair in their line."

In working the peat moss there are various conditions to be observed, according to the proprietary rights. One owner of farms and peat moss allows a tenant paying a rent of £100 a year as many peats as he can cut in eight days, employing a graver and two wheelers. A tenant paying £50 is allowed three days' work. Cottagers pay 6s. a day for the right. Another owner of peat moss charges a nominal fee of 10s. a year. It is interesting to know that a graver can cut between seven and eight cartloads of peats in a day, and that the average price of a cartload is 8s. The weekly wage of a graver is £1 10s., and that of a wheeler £1 1s. To prevent the flooding of the land the peat-workers stop cutting at a depth of 26ft. The same level is maintained throughout the mosses. Sea-sand is worked into the top of the peat soil to give it weight, and gradually it is brought under cultivation.

There is little to break the persistent regularity of the peat-worker's labour, save the whir of a startled pheasant, the erratic flight of the plover, the screaming gulls from the adjacent estuary, with glimpses of sportive rabbit and timid hare. So quiet is the moss that the passing of a horse and cart down the distant lane is a welcome diversion, and affords an element of sport in the hazard of a guess as to the identity of the driver. It is conceivable that, to the town-dweller, a life amid such tranquillity and isolation would seem closely akin to banishment. But the peat-workers are not like

The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods.

The purple of the heather, the black lines of the peat dykes, the sombre green of the bracken and bramble, the clumps of trembling birch, the bands of seared grass that on grey days glow



C. E. Walmsley.

BUILDING WINDROWS.

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like glinting sunlight, and the warrior clouds big with rain rolling towards the high fells, are wrought into the very texture of the peat-workers' life. The moss is their market-place; and the shy creatures of the undergrowth and the birds are their chief attractions.

Like most North Country workers, they are inclined to be taciturn, and to answer the questions of the stranger in

monosyllables; yet they strike their roots deep, and to their friends their love for their environment becomes articulate. Their wants are few and simple: so long as they are assured a "living wage," town-life and increased wage will not suffice to lure them from the country.

C. E. WALMSLEY.

FROM THE FARMS.

BROWN EGGS.

IT is a well-known fact that buyers, as a rule, think that eggs of a brown tint are richer than those that are white. Probably this is a fallacy, as the colour of the shell cannot in any way affect the quality of the egg; but still, those who keep poultry will be well advised to attend to the wishes of their customers. It is well to remember, then, that the breeds which produce brown eggs are, without exception, sitters; and the fowls which yield eggs of the desired colour are Langshans, Cochins, Plymouth Rocks, Orpingtons, Game, Wyandottes, Brahma, Faverolles, and Coucous de Malines. A writer in the Journal of the Board of Agriculture points out that of all these varieties the Langshan produces the most beautifully-tinted egg, and this, perhaps, explains why that variety at one time attained to such popularity. He proceeds to lay

their cattle that is desirable. Often farmers may be heard to say that little is to be gained by looking at the prize-winning cows at our great shows. They would not suit their purpose; and even if they did, the initial cost of acquiring them would be prohibitive. Therefore it happens that one can find in a herd kept purely for utilitarian purposes, that the animals, though quite unsuitable for exhibition, are first-rate in their own way. Obviously, it would be a very good thing to institute a scheme of prize-giving in which the animals would be considered purely and simply as dairy cows. We assume that something more than appearance would be taken into consideration—viz., the quantity of milk they give and the number of days in the year during which they remain in milk. If this were done a wholesome check would be applied to a system which has the effect of exaggerating the value of "points" as compared with efficiency, and we trust that during the coming year the idea will be put into practical application.

THE HORSE SHOWS.

The recurrence of the spring horse shows reminds us what an important interest that of horse-breeding is. We have for a fortnight the Agricultural Hall at Islington occupied by successive exhibitions of horseflesh, representing every class of horse used in the industries and pleasures of England. On the principle of business first we begin with the Shire horse, an animal which



W. Reid.

NEW ZEALAND SHEEP-YARDS AT SHEARING-TIME.

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down principles of crossing so as to obtain eggs of the proper colour, while taking advantage, at the same time, of the laying qualities of the non-sitters. The crosses he recommends are White Leghorn—Langshan, Ancona—Langshan, and Minorca—Langshan. These are given in order of merit, but if the colour and size of the egg only are to be regarded, the last-mentioned cross is the preferable one. Others that he mentions are the White Leghorn—Buff Orpington, Brown Leghorn—Buff Orpington, and Ancona—Buff Orpington. A point not to be omitted is, that in crossing two breeds it has to be remembered that it is necessary to depend chiefly upon the hens for the conservation of the tinted characteristic, and therefore, in making a cross, the male only should be selected from the egg-producing races.

PRIZES WITHOUT SHOWS.

We understand that a movement is on foot for inspecting and awarding prizes to cattle not prepared for exhibition, and this scheme deserves the fullest approval. It is a well-known fact that animals prepared for the show-yard are often made ready at the cost of their efficiency as milk-producing animals. Another feature which deserves no less attention is the tendency of a few owners to carry off all the prizes. Many of them are so rich that they can afford to purchase the very best animals in the market, and as their only ambition is to figure as prize-winners, they do not give that attention to the money-making qualities of

combines weight and activity in a wonderful manner. No breed of horse has improved more than this in the last twenty years, and the whole world are our customers for it. Not only has the Shire horse improved in activity and appearance, but in soundness. It is notable that the number of rejections for unsoundness at Islington has steadily decreased of late years. The value of this horse to farmers has been shown by the way in which the Shire stallions provided for the farmers of the Belvoir Hunt by Sir Gilbert Greenall and for those of Mr. Fernie's Hunt by some of the members have been appreciated. No benefit offered by hunting men to farmers has been more eagerly taken advantage of than this. To breed a good cart-horse is directly profitable. It is hardly a speculation in the sense that hunter-breeding is. The fact is that there is a general and sound principle that no horse-breeding pays unless the farmer has himself a use for the class of animal he breeds. In the case of the Shire horse the brood mare and the two year old are alike useful on the farm, and the prices obtained for the colts are clear profit. Next to the Shire horse the polo pony show is in some respects the most important. In less than ten years the polo pony has become an accepted type and a distinct breed. The foundation stock, the tap root of the polo pony, is the native pony of England and Ireland. These are, themselves, animals which are probably the result of crosses of various strains of blood on the aboriginal pony or horse of these islands,

which have in Connemara, on Exmoor, on Dartmoor, and on the Welsh hills, been reduced to a type as a result of natural selection. The type which survives is that which most readily adapts itself to the climate and pasturage of the moor and the forest and the hills. On this have been grafted certain strains of blood, most—perhaps all—of which can be traced back to small thoroughbred-stock. To a less extent we have Arab blood in the polo pony. The polo pony is, in fact, a small riding horse of a very excellent type. The necessities of the game made it essential that it should have docility as well as courage, hardiness in addition to speed. These little horses have great weight-carrying power in proportion to their size, and are wonderfully sound and enduring. In rough wild countries they make excellent hunters. The best of these ponies are an entirely English breed. No one doubts that the polo ponies of Great Britain are the best in the world. Foreigners must come to us to find them, and, indeed, they have been exported to Germany, to Australia, and to India in considerable numbers. The Islington shows of the last few years have demonstrated the fact that the ponies, old and young, are true to a type. There are no less than five classes, for ponies to be shown under saddle, for four and five year old ponies for riding, ponies suitable for hacks, and for heavy and light weight ponies. These will show what has been done in a short time to breed ponies of a type and size suitable for any work under saddle that may be required of them.

LITERARY NOTES.

IN spite of a name that we can scarcely consider admirable, *The Beauty Shop* (Werner Laurie) is a novel worth reading—not at all for pleasure, because the theme is a most disagreeable one. The writer has, as a matter of fact, composed what is more or less a tract. The beauty shop is a place in London kept by a woman adventurer, aided by a handsome blackmailing man, in which nostrums of one kind and another are supplied to those desirous of maintaining their good looks. The writer, without going over the score, or saying anything unfit for the ears of the *jeune fille*, shows what a horror such a place really is, and he very skilfully directs attention to the fact that ladies of fashion, far from being horrified, either laugh at such places or patronise them. If this book be the means of showing them the harm done by consciously encouraging such establishments, it will not have been published in vain. The principal lady in the *dramatis personae* falls in love—we were going to say—with the blackmailer, but she marries him simply for the fortune which he is supposed to possess; her life and happiness are utterly ruined, and the place to which she should have attained is taken by an attractive girl, who has been lured to the beauty shop for the purpose of making her hair and complexion an advertisement for the specious rubbish which is sold there.

The Speculations of John Steele, by Robert Barr (Chatto and Windus, 6s.). Mr. Robert Barr would be a much more faithful novelist if he paid more attention to what painters call "values." He has a tendency to draw his characters as if they were carved out of wood, with hard inflexible outlines. He does not recognise the fact that, be a man's characteristic what it may, this is toned down and variegated by a hundred lesser ideals and emotions. John Steele is like a railway train that is set running on a line of rails, with the result that we come to look upon all his actions as exactly those which should be expected. The interest of the volume, however, lies in the light it throws on American financial circles, particularly of those members who deal in railway shares, or who manage railways. Even if the presentation is somewhat melodramatic and lacking in the essential of true humour, it still shows an intimate acquaintance with the kind of life depicted, and the atmosphere remains interesting even when the story, as it often does, begins to flag. This is the kind of book of which we should expect to hear that it had a great sale, but a short one.

Mr. Oliver G. Pike is well known as one of the most accomplished of those photographers who take their studies directly from Nature, and some splendid examples of his art will be found in *Birdland Pictures* (the Crofton Publishing Company). This is, practically speaking, a portfolio where the photographs are mounted like cartoons, with a brief, but in every case an excellent, description on the opposite page. No attempt is made to deal exhaustively with British ornithology, but the book is a beautiful record of what we conceive to have been partly Mr. Pike's studies at home, and partly his rambles abroad. Such pictures as that of the robin's nest or the blackbirds probably belong to the former category, while the sea-birds have evidently been studied in their haunts on the Bass Rock, Farne Island, and other Northern points. Evidently from Norfolk, a very exquisite picture of the bearded tit has been procured, while it may be assumed that the merlin was photographed on "the margin of one of the wildest moors in Wales." By the by, Mr. Pike says that the unfortunate skylark or pipit, chased by a merlin, always falls a prey to his lightning-like flight. He may have been exceptional in his observation; but, as a matter of fact, a stout lark, in good condition, can outfly any merlin.

From the Cambridge University Press we have received the first volume of the new edition of Beaumont and Fletcher. It contains *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster, A King, And No King*, *The Scornful Lady*, and *The Custom of the Country*. In each case the text is edited by the late Mr. Arnold Glover, and the edition is a beautiful and very satisfactory one. The editorial note with which it is introduced is written by that accomplished scholar, Mr. A. R. Waller. As is the way with the Cambridge English Classics, the reprint contains all that was in the early editions of the dramatists. There is Shirley's address to the reader beginning "Poetry

is the Child of Nature, which regulated and made beautifull by Art, presenteth the most Harmonious of all other compositions." Then comes "The Stationer to the Readers," with his warranty that "You have here a New Booke; I can speak it clearely; for of all this large Volume of Comedies and Tragedies, not one, till now, was ever printed before." After that come the various poetical tributes that were made to the memory of Mr. John Fletcher, including verses by Denham, Waller, and Lovelace. Following that is the old title-page, and then the plays themselves. The book is one worthy of Beaumont and Fletcher, and beyond that it would be impossible to invent any higher word of praise.

Mr. Harold Tremayne has found an attractive title for his book in *Reminiscences of a Poor Hunting Man* (Drane). It was so deceptive that we opened the book scarcely expecting an imaginative work, but the actual memoirs of that very large and worthy class of people who are devoted to the royal sport without having the wherewithal to indulge in it to the extent they would like. However, it turned out to be a lively little novel of open-air and country hunting and sport generally. If the following passage had been actual truth, the writer would have soon forfeited his claim to be a poor man; that is to say, if he frequented country houses where there was a good billiard-table and plenty of bad players:

"Some of the other visitors had made their money in pork or similar trade; but what of that? I am not snobbish. The stable was excellent, and one night alone I cleared £85 at pool—a game of which I have already said I am passionately fond. An old tutor of mine used, in the early days, to din with monotonous regularity in my ears that whatever you do you should do well; therefore, I have made it one of my objects in life to play pool well."

It will be generally conceded that of all instruments of music, the harp is the most romantic, and accordingly much interest will be felt in *The Story of the Harp* (Walter Scott Publishing Company, Limited), by Mr. W. H. Gratton Flood. The author laments in his preface that the harp has gone out of fashion; we cannot help wondering why this should be so, because, as an accompaniment to songs, it is one of the most effective instruments. Like a great many other things, its early history is traced to Egypt, and there are, as one might expect, sections devoted to the harp in the Bible, the Irish harp, the Welsh harp, medieval harpers, English, Scotch, and Irish harpers, and so forth. The most interesting part of all this, to our mind, is that which treats of the harps and harpers of the Middle Ages, when nearly every man of consequence had one at his table. The following extract, giving an account of the Lamont harp, will afford the reader an opportunity of guessing the quality of the book from a very small sample:

"Among the harps still existing in Scotland is the famous Clarsach Lumanach, or Lamont harp, also called the "Lude" harp, supposed to have been brought from Argyllshire by Lilius Lamont on her marriage into the family of Robertson of Lude. Not improbably this fine instrument belonged to Rory dall O'Caheen, a famous Ulster harper, who died in Scotland about the year 1650. Gunn, in 1807, describes it as thirty-eight inches high and furnished with thirty-two strings, and Hudson, in 1840, says that this harp is probably Irish. It certainly has all the well-known Irish characteristics."

Harp collecting is one of the most pleasing fads of the day, and has much to recommend it. But we wish greatly that it could be accompanied by a revival of harp playing. The songs most suitable to the accompaniment of the harp are among the sweetest in our language—at least, in the estimation of the writer.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TELEPHONE IN COUNTRY DISTRICTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In connection with an article on "Telephones and Fruit-growing" in last week's issue, the telephone is already installed in many village post offices, but in my own neighbourhood its use is restricted to the transmission of official Post Office business. Still, there it is, and there seems little reason for not throwing it open to the public. It has always seemed to the writer that the second post now provided in rural districts at a large cost of public money is unnecessary. Life is not lived at such a pace away from towns as to render it imperative to get letters twice a day; but in cases of emergency to be able to use the telegraph or telephone on the spot would amply meet all requirements.—H. L. T.

A RARE MAMMAL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Professor E. A. Minchin some months ago went out to Entebbe to study "sleeping sickness." He has now returned, and will shortly publish the results of his investigations. But he did more than this. Being a keen zoologist, he took out with him a collector, and has brought back some valuable natural history specimens. Among these is a living example of a species of galago—one of the lemurs—and this he exhibited at the last meeting of the Zoological Society, where, needless to say, it excited great interest, an interest, too, which was heightened by the fact that for about half-an-hour it was allowed to wander at large among the Fellows, who were amazed at its wonderful agility. It took the most astonishing leaps from picture-frames to benches, and from benches to the cords running down the walls from the ventilators. These it scaled with marvellous rapidity; but still more marvellous was its descent, since it came down hand over hand and head downwards with the speed and ease of a mouse running along the floor! Resembling a squirrel in general shape, and smaller than our native squirrels, it differs therefrom in the enormous size of its eyes, which almost touch one another in the middle line. Hence it will be seen it is nocturnal in its habits. Fortunately, artificial light in no way distresses it, though in daylight it is almost blind. One of its most charming traits is its wonderful tameness. Nothing seems to please it more than being scratched,

and there was great competition among the Fellows to earn this privilege as it ran along over their shoulders, calling a halt whenever it noticed the friendly fingers waiting to perform this office! This quaint little beast was taken by a native boy with its mother, who, however, escaped. In two days all fear of its captors had vanished, and, though given a free run in a room with open windows, no attempt at escape was ever made.

—W. P. PYCRAFT.

SOWING THE SEED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Some time ago, while I was making a little tour in County Wicklow, I came across a man scattering seed in the old-fashioned manner. Across his shoulders was slung a pillow-case, which served his purpose admirably, and he seemed very much amused at my photography, while his Irish wit certainly made me smile not a little.—H. H.

A LARGE SKATE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The capture of these huge fish, weighing 100lb. and upwards, on rod and line, has been accomplished on several occasions around our islands during recent years—off Skye two years ago, for instance, and last year at Ballycotton—showing the power of rod and line in skilful hands. In fact, the hardest problem comes at the end of the fight, when the huge mass has been hauled up to the side of the boat, and the question is how to get him in over the gunwale. In this case the boat was big enough to use a pulley from the mast, but in an ordinary small craft, most unorthodox instruments, including the boat-hook, have been known to be pressed into service. Of course, skate give little sport compared with the dashing pollack, and playing them resembles nothing so much as attempting to haul up the big umbrella which years ago gave rise to rumours of such gigantic pike in a London reservoir.

B. V.

REASON OR INSTINCT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Perhaps some of your readers who may be interested in the reasoning processes of animals might be able to follow out the trains of thought pursued by two dogs of mine on different occasions. One dog, a black poodle, has a great dislike of one of the Stores, because she has been chained up outside there several times. On approaching anywhere near the shop she will make up her mind we are going in there, and will cross the road to avoid being tied up. One day the dog was walking along the Brompton Road with two of my maid-servants. Just short of the shop one maid got into an omnibus going eastwards, and the other was to walk back to South Kensington with the dog. However, the dog got away from the maid who was trying to hold her, and raced after the omnibus, pursued by the maid, who traced the dog well past the Stores, and nearly to Albert Gate. There the maid lost all traces of the dog, and on making enquiries could hear nothing of her. After a time the maid started for home to report her loss. On passing



the Stores on her way home there was the dog chained up, and the porter said she had come there a few minutes before, and had complacently allowed him to tie her up. These are the facts exactly as they happened. Now what was that dog's train of thought? I can only suppose that she looked upon the shop as a place where dogs were tied up, and subsequently released by their friends, and feeling herself lost, she had voluntarily put herself under the protection of the detested Stores in the hope that her friends would come and fetch her. Another poodle of mine, some years ago, went with my wife to another shop in a hansom, which my wife kept waiting while she went into the shop. The dog followed her mistress through several rooms and then lost her. On going back to the cab my wife found the dog sitting up in it. In this case the dog's train of thought must have been, "I shall never find my mistress in this crowd. I had better go back to the cab, as she is sure to return to it, as she has left parcels in it, and has not paid the cabman." This dog knew perfectly well that cabs were for hire. She would frequently jump into an empty hansom or four-wheeler standing on a rank if she felt tired, and would always do so if it came on to rain, but I never knew her attempt to get into a private carriage standing by the kerbstone. No amount of instinct will account for these incidents, and I cannot imagine any other trains of thought than those I have suggested.—C DE LACY LACY.

BLOODHOUNDS AT EXERCISE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Perhaps you may be able to find room for the insertion of the enclosed photograph of bloodhounds out for their daily exercise. It is interesting as showing the honest "heel and toe" work which a man must be capable of doing if he is to be of any use in walking these hounds out of a morning, and

it may also, perhaps, give me an opportunity of drawing attention to the endless amusement, at little cost, which anyone who loves dogs and lives in the country may procure for himself by keeping a few bloodhounds. It can be arranged, for instance, that a trail shall be laid in such a manner that the hounds may come across it accidentally in their walk, and it is most interesting to place one's self near the spot where the trail begins, to watch the hounds suddenly brighten up, and hear their beautiful note boom out as they pick up the scent and settle to their work. No better description of a bloodhound at his work can be written than the one in which Somerville says:

"Soon the sagacious brute, his curling tail
Flourish'd in air, low bending, plies around,
His busy nose, the steaming vapour snuffs
Inquisitive, nor leaves one turf untry'd,
Till, conscious of the recent stains, his heart
Beats quick; his snuffling nose, his active
tail
Attest his joy: then with deep op'ning
mouth

That makes the welkin tremble, he proclaims
Th' audacious felon, foot by foot he marks
His winding way, while all the list'ning
crowd

Applaud his reas'nings. . . ."

If the subject is likely to be of interest to your readers, I shall be pleased later on to send you some pictures of bloodhounds at work.—O.